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A STATE IN ARMS

JOHN RICKER

JOHN SAYWELL

CLARKE, IRWIN & COMPANY LIMITED, TORONTO/VANCOUVER



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Originally published as part of *The Emergence of Europe*,
Volume I in *The Story of Western Man*

Education: ISBN: 0-7720-0600-8

Trade: ISBN: 0-7720-0608-3

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Photo research: Historical Services and Consultants Limited,
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Cover photo: Christian Chapel built underground under the
Appian Way

2 3 4 5 AP 77

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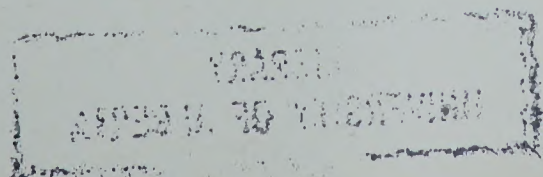
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INTRODUCTION

From a crude military encampment on the banks of the Tiber to the capital of an empire of 90,000 people—stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Middle East in the east, and from Africa in the south to Britain in the north—to an empire disintegrating from within and ultimately collapsing before waves of barbarian invasions: that is the story of Rome. It is a fascinating story whether seen through the eyes of Shakespeare or Hollywood, or through the excavations and writings of archaeologists and historians.

However fascinating, the Romans both attract and repel the modern reader. Pillage and torture went hand in hand with the finest legal system the world had seen. Roman engineers and architects united the Western world by a network of major highways (a few of which are still used today), along which tramped hundreds of thousands of slaves. The Colosseum was a tribute to Roman technology; the performances inside were witness to Roman savagery.

After tracing and explaining the history of Rome from its beginnings to its collapse, we provide a comprehensive view of all facets of life in the Roman Empire at its height, emphasizing in particular the evolution of Roman law and its significance for the Western world. In “The City of God” we follow the development of Christianity from the birth of Christ to its triumph as the official religion of the Roman Empire. For Rome's great legacy to Western civilization included both its law and the religion that was born within the Empire and that survived its collapse.

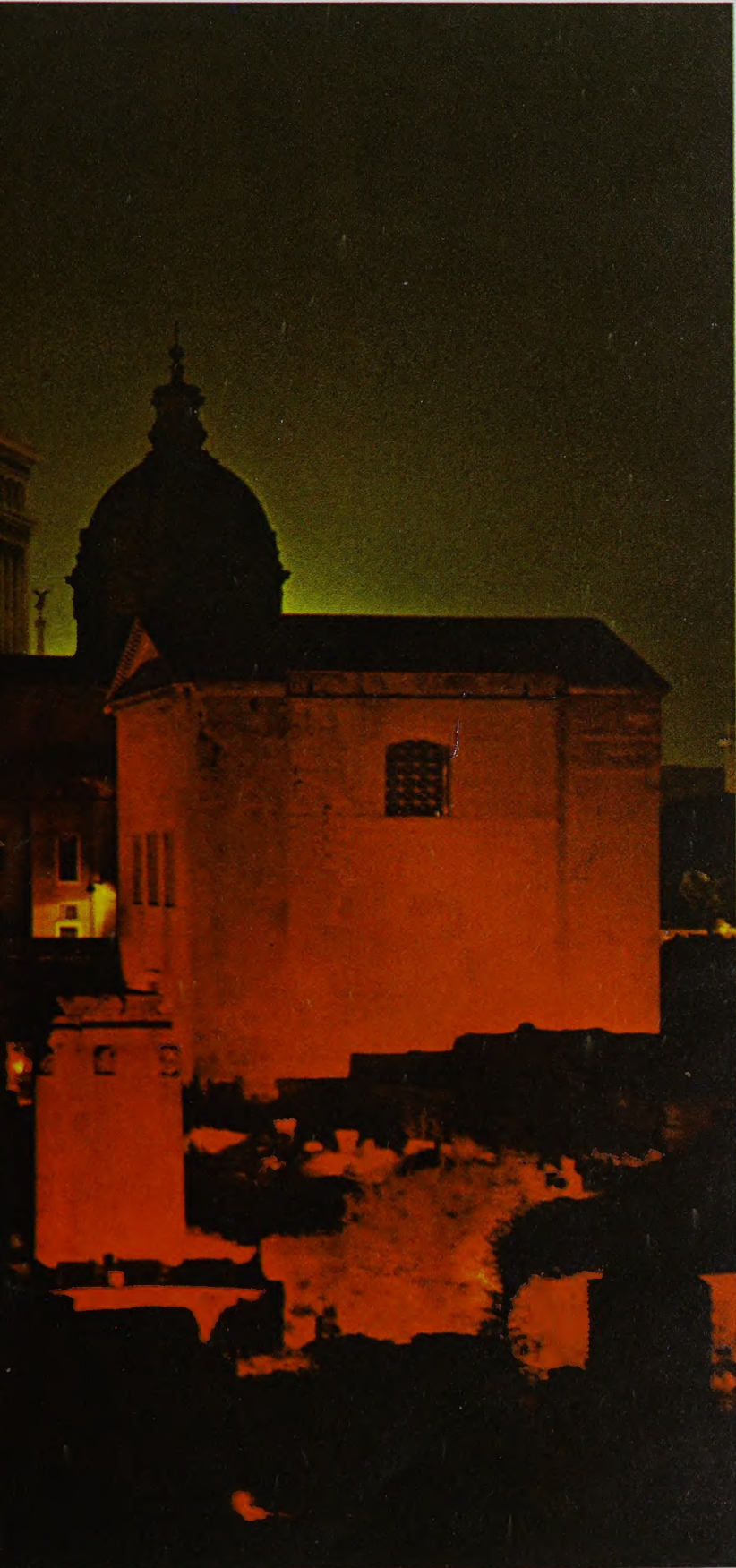
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ROME: A STATE IN ARMS

From City-state to Empire
The Roman achievement
The City of God



From City-state to Empire



Despite the brilliance of their civilization, the Greeks had failed to bring unity and peace to the Mediterranean world. Alexander the Great had come close. His conquests and marches had spread Greek culture throughout the ancient world. But when his Empire began to crumble not long after his death, Alexander's dream of world unity collapsed with it. It remained for a new western power, Rome, to try to succeed where the Greeks and Alexander had failed.

The Romans were the greatest conquerors and empire builders of the ancient world. By nature they were not a fierce and warlike people. They do not seem at first to have had great ambitions to rule over anyone else. Yet, two centuries after the birth of Christ, the Roman Empire reached from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Fertile Crescent in the east, and from Africa in the south to Britain in the north.

In these lands lived almost 90,000,000 people. In some ways they were among the most fortunate people of all time, for they enjoyed more peace and order than did most earlier peoples. They also had great material comforts, for the Romans were the great engineers and builders of the ancient world. Many of their magnificent buildings, roads and aqueducts still stand as monuments to their creative genius.

In the fifth century A.D. the Roman Empire collapsed, as every great empire in history eventually has done. But the influence of the Roman Empire has never disappeared. It lives today in many of the laws, institutions, languages and ideas of Western civilization. To appreciate fully our debt to Rome we must study Rome's history, for only then can we understand how and why a little city-state in Italy became the ruler of the Mediterranean world.

The Roman Forum: Capital of an Empire



THE CONQUEST OF ITALY

After Rome had become a great world power, Roman writers tried to provide exciting accounts of the origins of their people. One of Rome's greatest poets explained that Rome had been founded by a Trojan hero, Aeneas. With a small band of brave followers he had fled from ruined Troy, and after many adventures reached the plain of Latium in Italy. Another early legend states that Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by two brothers, Romulus and Remus, twin sons of the god Mars. As infants they had been thrown into the Tiber River. Miraculously they had survived and had been raised by a she-wolf. In time they became strong leaders and established the city of Rome.

These stories are much more interesting than the facts. In truth, Rome was no different at first from dozens of other little cities in the peninsula

Suggesting the greatness of Imperial Rome is Trajan's column, one of the most famous landmarks in the city. The stone pillar rises to a height of a hundred feet. It recalls the achievements of the emperor, Trajan (A.D. 98-117), under whom the Roman Empire reached its greatest extent. Seen here is a portion of the three- to four-foot wide continuous band of carved relief figures which spirals upward. The band of relief provides a story carved in stone of Trajan's campaigns in Dacia. As the central figure in the stirring account of Roman military success, Trajan appears often among the 2500 figures on the column. At the foot of the column where the story begins, he can be seen leading a column of Roman soldiers from the wall of a fortified city across the Danube River. Father Danube watches from a nearby cave. As the story rapidly unfolds, Trajan can be seen in many different activities — planning a campaign, taking part in a religious ceremony, directing the building of fortifications and questioning a spy. The great stone column gives a more lively, interesting and detailed account of a Roman military campaign than can be found in any single printed document.

of Italy. Barbaric tribesmen had been living on the site of Rome some 2000 years before the birth of Christ. Although we do not know the exact date, Rome seems to have been founded no later than 1000 B.C. by the Latins, people from the north who had been pushing into Italy for about a thousand years. Rome was an ideal centre of settlement. The Tiber River was both a shield which discouraged invaders and a highway for trade. Seven surrounding hills provided additional defence.

One of the great turning points in Rome's history occurred about 650 B.C. when the Etruscans, a people to the north of Rome, conquered the settlement on the Tiber. We know little about the mysterious Etruscans because we have not been able to find a key to their language. We do know that they were a highly civilized, fun-loving people and that they had a great effect on Roman history. Under Etruscan rule, Rome became a prosperous city-state under a strong king. The Etruscans taught the Romans improved methods of farming, building, manufacturing and trading. As a result, the Romans increased in wealth, and their city became increasingly important. But although they had benefitted from the Etruscans, the Romans revolted against them. According to tradition, in 509 B.C. the Romans drove the last Etruscan king from the throne.

In the two and a half centuries after the defeat of the Etruscans the little city of Rome gradually came to control the whole peninsula of Italy. The Romans had not planned to expand in this way. They simply wanted to survive, to protect their boundaries from ambitious and warlike neighbours. To do this it was often necessary to wage war. After the Etruscans' domination ended in the region of the Tiber, many of their former subject peoples fought with each other for as much of the best land as they could get. Barbarous mountain tribesmen from eastern Italy were another danger. Previously held in check by the Etruscans, they now launched continuous raids from their mountain strongholds upon the better lands of west-central Italy. From the north came waves of invaders from Gaul. On one occasion in

These figures form the handle of the lid of a fourth-century B.C. bronze container found in Latium. Roman soldiers, who fought almost continuously throughout the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. to preserve Rome, were dressed and equipped very much like those shown here supporting their dead comrade between them. The figures suggest the strength and determination of the early Romans, who were prepared to endure famine, disease and such disastrous invasions as that of the Gauls in 390 B.C. to maintain their city-state.



390 B.C. an invading party of wild Gauls defeated the Roman army and destroyed Rome. But the determined Romans refused to give up. They constantly tried to keep their closest neighbours under control, either by making them allies or subjects. As a result, Rome's borders began to expand and she constantly found herself with new neighbours on her frontiers. Feeling that if she did not conquer them, they might conquer her, Rome was led on to further expansion.

The desire for security was not the only reason for expansion. As Rome's population grew, there was an increasing need for more land. And once Romans had tasted victory, many were moved by greed, personal ambition or the love of fighting. No one reason explains completely why Rome fought for more territory. The important thing is that by 265 B.C. Rome had established her supremacy over Italy.

It was no accident that Rome succeeded in dominating the Italian peninsula. There are many reasons to explain why the Romans succeeded where other city-states would have failed. For one thing, the Romans prized, and were forced to develop, those qualities of character that would tend to make them successful. From their earliest years Romans learned to value hard work, loyalty, courage and a serious approach to life. The family was the most important unit in society. The Roman father ruled over it as a dictator, controlling every action of its members. He could sell his sons into slavery or even put them to death if they misbehaved. Not surprisingly, under this kind of discipline, the Romans became accustomed to obey, and learned to respect authority without questioning it.

The qualities that the Romans admired and tried to develop were the very qualities desirable in first-rate soldiers. Without her excellent army Rome could never have conquered Italy. The basic unit of the Roman army was the *legion* of 3600 men. The legion was often divided into more manageable units or *maniples* (handfuls) of 60 to 120 men. Equipped with iron-tipped javelins, short swords, helmets, shields and lances, the Roman legion in time became the toughest

The practical Romans were much more interested in winning battles than in cutting dashing figures on a parade square. The typical legionary seen here is equipped to perform efficiently on the battlefield. The Romans were never too proud to learn from their enemies or neighbours. The helmet shape came originally from Greece, and the mail tunic from Gaul; the short sword was modelled on those used by the Celts in Spain.



and most effective fighting force of ancient times. No other army could boast of higher morale. This spirit was kept at a high level by a combination of harsh punishment and generous rewards. If a legion backed down or mutinied, it might suffer the horrible punishment of decimation (the execution of every tenth man). But for the first soldier who mounted the wall during the assault on a city there was a crown of gold.

But brave and dedicated soldiers do not alone account for Rome's successful expansion. Roman politicians also tried to make certain that their enemies would never unite against Rome. Their basic policy was to "divide and rule." Sometimes they made an alliance with one possible enemy against another. On other occasions they prevented enemies from uniting against Rome by occupying land between them.

Even more impressive than the actual conquest of other peoples in battle was Rome's ability to maintain control over them afterwards. One of the main reasons for Rome's success in this was her generous policy towards subject peoples. She did not rule over the other Italian cities as a conqueror or demand payment from them. Instead she offered them friendship and formed treaties of alliance. Sometimes she offered them some of the benefits of Roman citizenship. In return, the conquered tribe or city was expected to give Rome military assistance. Although Rome controlled their relations with other countries, she allowed the defeated peoples almost complete control over their own local affairs. Through this sensible and restrained policy Rome changed enemies into friends and allies, and eventually united all Italy under her rule.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

Perhaps the most important single reason explaining Rome's successful conquest of Italy was the system of government she developed during the two and a half centuries of expansion. Without an efficient system of government Rome could not have survived the constant years of warfare. And if the government had not been just, it could not have inspired the constant devotion of

These relief figures from the column of Augustus show a group of Senators on their way to a session. Bound together by ties of family, wealth and privilege, they enjoyed such great power that they were said to rule Rome "as though it were a conquered city obedient to their whims." Since they worked in great secrecy, we know little about the way they made many of their great decisions. We do know that they used their almost unlimited power without much thought for the welfare of the mass of the people, and that they often showed little respect for the laws of the Republic. We also know that within the Senate there was a sort of inner group of about twenty men, who, for the most part, controlled the actions of the larger body.

the citizens. The Romans did not keep the same system of government throughout the entire period. As they came to rule more and more territory, they had to create a more complicated form of government than had been necessary for running a small city-state. Throughout these years, too, there was an almost continuous struggle between the two classes of Roman citizens for control of the government. On the one hand were the *patricians*, wealthy, land-owning aristocrats who enjoyed special rights and privileges; on the other were the *plebeians*, the ordinary citizens of Rome — city workers, craftsmen and farmers.

When the Etruscans had been driven from Rome, political power fell into the hands of the small number of patricians, since they had led the revolt. The patricians set up a *republic*, a form of government in which, in theory at least, the people and not a king governed. In fact, however, the patricians themselves controlled the government. The chief officials in the Roman Republic were two *consuls* who replaced the Etruscan kings and had supreme power over the state and army. Possibly to prevent any one man from becoming too powerful, either consul could veto or reject the acts of the other. To assist the consuls there were a number of other officials or magistrates. These men handled such matters as finance, the courts, roads and buildings, and



the organizing of the city's police force.

More influential than the magistrates was the Senate, composed at first of about 300 members. Senators were chosen mainly from the patrician class and held office for life. Originally the Senate was supposed merely to give wise advice on the running of the state. But since it was composed largely of former consuls and magistrates, the Senate in fact had great authority and really did run the state. The early Republic also had two assemblies in which all Roman citizens were represented. But these assemblies had few real powers and were controlled for the most part by the patricians. In the early Republic, most of Rome's citizens were members of the plebeian class, and as such had no power in government and no chance to gain it.

In addition to this lack of political power, the plebeians had many other grievances. Illness,

crop failure or other disasters often forced them to borrow and fall deeply into debt. As in Greece, failure to repay these debts could result in enslavement for the plebeian and his family. Among their other complaints was the law which forbade marriages between plebeians and patricians.

The early centuries of the Roman Republic were thus marked by the struggle of the plebs for a greater voice in government and for social equality. They had one great advantage. These were the years when Rome was fighting for her life, and the plebeian farmer and soldier were necessary to provide food and to defend the city. When Rome began to expand throughout the Italian peninsula, the ordinary Roman citizen became even more important. The plebeians soon realized that they were the key to Rome's survival and pressed the patricians to grant them reforms. Since the patricians also realized how important

the plebeians were, they gradually and wisely agreed to share some of their power with the great mass of the citizens.

The first and perhaps the most important plebeian gain occurred about 470 B.C. when the plebeians forced the patricians to agree to the election of special officials known as *tribunes*. Originally the tribunes' function was to protect plebeians from injustice by the patrician government. Later, they were given the power to block the acts or measures of magistrates or senators. Another important plebeian gain was a written code of law known as the Twelve Tables. The important thing about the code was that it was written. The laws themselves did little to increase the liberties of the plebeians, but they did let the people know what legal rights they had. Before the law had been set down in this way, patrician judges had often interpreted it as they wished, probably to the advantage of patricians rather than plebeians. Eventually, the plebeians also gained an assembly of their own. In time, this assembly became the most important law-making body, for its decisions had to be obeyed by plebeians and patricians alike. By the end of the third century B.C. the plebeians had also won the right to hold the higher offices in the state, and in 362 B.C. the first plebeian consul was elected.

Yet, even after these reforms had been made, the Roman Republic was not in practice ruled by the mass of its citizens. Since there was no payment for taking part in government, the great mass of Romans could not afford to hold political office. Thus only the wealthy plebeians benefitted from the reforms. They soon joined with the old aristocrats to form a new ruling class in control of the high offices and the Senate. Although the citizens in the assemblies had won considerable power, they seldom used it. As before, the aristocratic Senate dominated the government of Rome. But if the government was not democratic, it worked. For the most part, the mass of Roman citizens were content with, even proud of, their government. For under aristocratic leadership the little city-state on the Tiber came to dominate all Italy.

ROME VERSUS CARTHAGE

In becoming ruler of Italy, Rome had also become a major military power in the Mediterranean. Whether she liked it or not, she could neither ignore, nor be ignored by, the other Mediterranean powers, Egypt, Syria, Macedonia and Carthage. For many years after 265 B.C. Rome's main aim was to uphold her position among these powers. In the end, she fought and conquered them all and welded them into the greatest empire of ancient time.

Rome's first enemy outside Italy was the African city-state of Carthage. Originally a Phoenician colony, Carthage had become the greatest naval and commercial power in the western Mediterranean. When the two first faced each other in war, she was three times the size of Rome and boasted the most powerful battle fleet in the world. Carthage also controlled the islands of Sardinia and Corsica and the western part of Sicily. The two powers clashed when Carthage threatened the Greek cities of Syracuse and Mesana on the eastern coast. This attempt to bring all of the island of Sicily into her empire alarmed the Romans. They determined to check this expanding power on their very doorstep. The First Punic War (from the Latin word meaning Phoenician) broke out in 264 B.C. and dragged on for twenty-three years.

The Romans liked to say "Rome loses battles, but never a war." Against Carthage they proved it. The main fighting took place in Sicily and on the seas. At first the greatest sea power in the world naturally had the advantage. But within an amazingly short time, the resourceful Roman farmers had built a navy of one hundred five-decked ships of war, using a captured Carthaginian battleship as a model. Eventually they became reasonably good sailors and developed effective naval tactics which enabled them to board enemy vessels and engage in hand-to-hand combat. In this kind of fighting, the Roman legionary had no match.

Finally, in 241 B.C. the Romans defeated the Carthaginians and forced them to seek peace. The peace treaty gave Rome her first territory outside

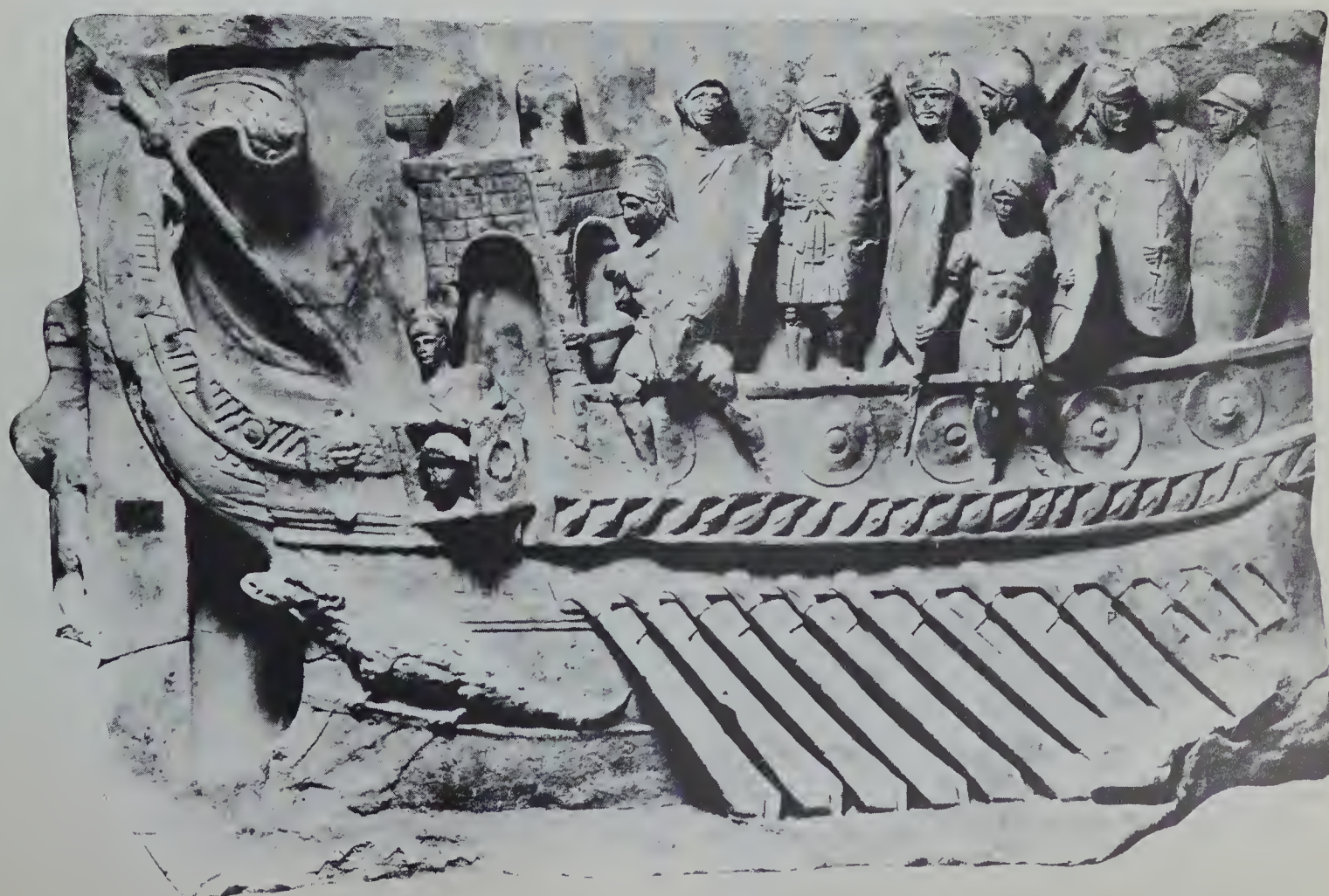
of Italy; the island of Sicily became her first overseas province. Rome had taken her first step along the road to an overseas empire.

The treaty was merely a truce. It was inevitable that Rome and Carthage would fight again, for Carthage, though beaten, had not been destroyed. A young Carthaginian nobleman, Hannibal, resolved that Carthage, not Rome, would be master of the western Mediterranean. As a young boy he had sworn an oath of undying hatred to Rome. When he became leader of the Carthaginians, Hannibal established strong forces in Spain in preparation for the overland invasion of Italy. The Second Punic War broke out in 218 B.C.

The Roman navy originated during the first war against Carthage. It soon developed into a powerful fighting force, really a sea-going part of the Roman legion fighting on water rather than land. Since the Romans had the best infantry soldiers in the world, they tried to make warfare at sea as much like a land battle as possible, in order that their soldiers could be used to the best advantage. Roman war galleys were rowed by slaves so that infantrymen like those shown here could reach the battle fresh, board the enemy ship and destroy its often exhausted crew of rowers.

when Hannibal attacked a city in Spain that was allied to Rome.

Rome angrily declared war and prepared to cross the Mediterranean and invade North Africa. But Hannibal wrecked these plans by striking first. Moving with unbelievable speed he marched across Spain, crossed the Rhone River and struggled through the rugged Alps. Before the Romans could catch their breath, he was in northern Italy. Strengthened by recruits picked up along the way and using elephants as his tank corps, Hannibal marched victoriously towards Rome. At Lake Trasimeno he outmanoeuvred, trapped and slaughtered a Roman army. Shocked by the disaster, the Romans appointed a new commander, Fabius. Refusing to engage in open battle with Hannibal's main army, Fabius was content merely to threaten the Carthaginians. This sound strategy of delay annoyed both Hannibal and, surprisingly, the Romans. Impatient to destroy the daring invader, they demanded immediate action. The cautious Fabius was dismissed. The new commander, Varro, enthusiastically led the Roman army to its greatest defeat. At the Battle of Cannae, Hannibal again showed his military genius, trapping and destroying almost an entire Roman army. Only 10,000 of an original 50,000 Roman soldiers escaped death or capture.



FROM CITY-STATE TO EMPIRE

Despite this disaster the Romans did not lose heart. Although Syracuse in Sicily, and Macedonia now joined the Carthaginians, most of Rome's allies in Italy remained loyal. The dogged Romans sent armies against Syracuse and Macedonia and into Spain and Africa. Hannibal soon found himself cut off from supplies and reinforcements. Even so, he campaigned brilliantly. But Rome refused to go down, and eventually took the offensive against Carthage herself. Although Hannibal returned to lead the defence, the Romans under an able young general, Scipio, completely defeated the Carthaginian forces at

the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C. They had no choice but to make peace.

For Carthage the defeat was disastrous. She had to surrender Spain and her Mediterranean islands, destroy her fleet and pay a huge tribute to Rome. In addition, she had to promise never to go to war against any state in the future without Rome's permission. Rome had become ruler of the western Mediterranean, a world power with a growing empire.

THE PROBLEMS OF EMPIRE

No sooner had Rome defeated Carthage than



she became involved with the two great powers of the eastern Mediterranean, Macedonia and Syria. Exhausted as she was, Rome had no desire to continue fighting; nor did she particularly wish to gain a great empire. But she was determined to defend the powerful position she had won in the western Mediterranean. Convinced that it was threatened by Macedonia and Syria, Rome went to war with these powers. At the end of the conflict Macedonia was defeated. She became a province of the Empire in 148 B.C. The Greek states were added to the Empire shortly after. Fifteen years later, Asia Minor also came under

Roman control. Thus, by 133 B.C. the little city-state on the Tiber had expanded to include Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece in the east, and Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, southern Gaul, parts of Spain and the north coast of Africa in the west. The Mediterranean Sea had become a Roman lake.

During this period of expansion and wars, Rome changed. At first she had fought only to defend herself. Now she tried to find excuses to attack others. The old ideals tended to be forgotten in the desire for wealth, fame and empire. A third war with Carthage showed a new Roman ruthlessness and brutality. After the Second Punic War, Carthage was no threat to Rome. But the old hatred and fear remained. When Carthage showed signs of renewed strength, many Romans became alarmed. One Roman aristocrat helped



Rome's amazing success in expanding her empire is not difficult to explain. The same skills that led to the creation of the world's finest roads, bridges and aqueducts also helped the Romans to become resourceful and efficient soldiers. Primitive peoples had little chance of withstanding attacks by well trained legionaries. Besides having personal fighting skills, the soldiers were equipped with a great variety of war machines which could hurl a deadly rain of stones and spears among enemy ranks. In this relief Roman soldiers prepare to use a series of mechanical slings to assist their offence.





This relief has been variously described by historians as a Roman banker receiving interest payments from a number of farmers, provincials paying taxes to the Roman collector and a landlord collecting rent from his peasants. Whatever the correct description may be, there is no doubt that after the war with Carthage a new middle class of wealthy traders and bankers arose, and this new class caused a great deal of unrest in Rome. They constantly demanded a greater voice in the political affairs of the state. Through their control of food imports and by charging high interest rates on loans, they helped to destroy the peasant farmers of Rome, who at one time had produced much of the wealth of the city-state.

to keep this fear alive by ending every speech he made, whatever the subject, with the words, "Carthage must be destroyed." Rome eventually found an excuse to declare war in 149 B.C. After a three-year siege she completely destroyed the city and sold its surviving citizens into slavery. In a final act of vengeance, the Romans sowed the ground with salt so that nothing could grow there again.

Rome's wars and conquests created many problems. It was one thing to gain an empire; it was another matter to rule it effectively. It soon became clear that Rome was not doing a very good job of governing hers. She had organized most of her new lands into provinces ruled by governors appointed by the Senate. Although some governed well, there were others who were greedy and cruel. The government at Rome took little interest in the actions of its officials in the

provinces so long as the tribute money poured into Rome and the territories remained under control. Such misgovernment, however, eventually led to rebellions which proved very serious because Rome at that time did not have a permanent army to defend her empire.

Another problem was the appearance in Rome of a new class known as the *equites* or knights. These were wealthy businessmen and bankers who had made a great deal of money as the result of Rome's conquests. They made great profits from lending money, collecting taxes in the provinces, supplying the army and working on government contracts. Thus the knights had great economic power in Rome. But they lacked political influence. Increasingly they resented the fact that a small number of aristocrats in the Senate were the real rulers of Rome. The agitation of the knights for political power kept Rome in a continual state of unrest.

There were other causes of unrest arising out of the wars of expansion. Although these wars had brought wealth to Rome, the wealth was not distributed among all the people. The rich tended to become richer and the poor poorer. Particularly hard hit were Rome's small independent farmers. Great quantities of tribute grain poured into Italy, where it was sold at much lower prices than Italian grain. Small farmers could not compete; nor did they have the money necessary to change from grain growing to vine and olive culture, or sheep or cattle grazing. To add to their difficulties, much of the land was being bought up by a small number of rich men, often former generals and governors who had made great profits from Rome's conquests. A plentiful supply of

slaves captured in foreign wars gave these new landowners all the cheap labour they needed. Faced with this competition, the small Roman farmer often had to give up his own land. Sometimes he worked as a farmer on a large estate. More often he drifted to the city where he joined a growing mass of jobless, desperate and often violent men. The sturdy farmers, once the backbone of Rome, had become a mob depending upon the government for food and entertainment ("bread and circuses"). The Roman Republic was sick.

By the end of the second century B.C. it was clear that drastic reforms would be needed to cure Rome's ills. The Senate, now little more than a rich man's club, was concerned only with protecting its power and wealth. Faced with these problems, two young brothers of a noble and respected Roman family, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, offered a reform programme. Tiberius was elected tribune in 133 B.C. He was convinced that Rome's main problem was the decline of her small farmers. To improve their lot, he proposed to distribute some of the farming lands belonging to the state among the poor and landless people of Rome. However, the great landowners in the

Senate (many of whom were controlling or profiting from the state lands) opposed such a distribution. They started a riot in which Tiberius and many of his followers were killed. A few years later his younger brother, Gaius Gracchus, proposed even more sweeping land reforms. His programme included the building of roads and the founding of settlements and colonies, including

The man who did most to change Rome's citizen army into a professional standing army was a general named Marius who defended Rome brilliantly against northern barbarian invaders during the last century of the Republic. He was elected to the consulate seven times. The soldiers of the new army sometimes referred to themselves as "Marius' mules." When they were not fighting, they were at work on an endless variety of jobs which included the building of roads and bridges and fortifications such as the timber ones being prepared by the legionaries in this relief. The Romans probably invented the military practice of "digging in," for they never went into battle or retired for the night without preparing some kind of fortified position.



FROM CITY-STATE TO EMPIRE

one near Carthage, to provide new opportunities for Rome's jobless and poor. He also created a court to try dishonest governors of the provinces. Once again the Senate opposed the reforms and to prevent capture and public execution, Gaius took his own life.

The failure of the Gracchi brothers marked the end of peaceful and orderly attempts to solve Rome's problems. As rival groups fought for power, Rome went through a century of corruption, murder and civil war. At the same time she became involved in wars on many fronts outside Italy — in Asia, Spain, Gaul, Macedonia and Thrace. Naturally the army became increasingly important both in the defence of Rome and in the struggle for power within Rome. During this period the army changed from a militia of citizens who fought for the length of the campaign to a force of professional soldiers who remained in the army for many years. As a result, the soldiers began to feel a greater loyalty to their general than to Rome. Thus, political power in Rome often passed to the general who could control the legions, as the career of Sulla showed. Sulla was an aristocrat supported by the Senate. He had been elected consul in 88 B.C. After putting down a rebellion in Asia, Sulla returned in triumph to Rome only to find his political opponents in control of the government. Backed by his legions, Sulla seized power, made himself dictator, ruthlessly slaughtered thousands of his opponents and seized their property.

Disorders following Sulla's death paved the way for three men to gain complete control of Rome. The first was Pompey, a brilliant soldier who had won great fame by clearing the Mediterranean Sea of the pirates who had become a menace to Roman trade. He had also defeated Rome's enemies in the eastern Mediterranean and enlarged Rome's empire by creating the new provinces of Bithynia and Pontus, Cilicia and Syria. Pompey also added immense booty to Rome's treasury. As a result of his conquests, Roman power in the east extended from the Black Sea to the borders of Egypt. The second man was Crassus, a friendly but ambitious mil-

When Julius Caesar (100 B.C. - 44 B.C.) threw in his lot with the other two members of the First Triumvirate, he had already shown some of the qualities that would make him one of the most famous of all Romans. He had travelled widely throughout the Mediterranean world and had managed to stay alive despite the attempts of his enemies to be rid of him. He had also demonstrated great political skill in a number of important positions, and had managed to build up a great fortune which he had used to win great popularity. His later conquest of Gaul with its huge resources was one of the greatest achievements of the century and revealed Caesar as a military genius. His brilliant account of the Gallic War is both clear and vigorous. During his campaigns in Gaul Caesar had also launched two invasions of Britain, in 55 and 54 B.C. But although he claimed to have conquered Britain, his campaigns had not been decisive, and it was left to his successors to make Britain part of the Empire.





lionaire. He had helped to defeat Spartacus, who for six years had terrorized Italy with an army of 90,000 run-away slaves. Finally there was Julius Caesar, a young and ambitious politician and soldier.

In 60 B.C. the three formed a secret alliance (which has since become known as the First Triumvirate, or, Rule of Three Men). Their purpose was to join their forces to further their own personal ambitions. At first all went well. Pompey was rewarded for his eastern conquests. Crassus received a military command in the east. Caesar became a consul and secured command of the armies in Gaul. The conquest of Gaul would not only put an end to the annoying raids from the north, but also give Caesar a chance to gain fame and an army. Within eight years the brilliant Caesar had conquered the entire country, and Rome's empire now included all the territories west of the Rhine. Moreover, Caesar now commanded a great army of thirteen legions composed of troops fanatically loyal to their general.

Not everyone rejoiced in Caesar's triumphs. Crassus had been killed in battle and was no longer a rival. But Pompey watched Caesar's

Although Caesar's accounts of his exploits in Gaul are generally accurate, he often left out details that would not have been flattering to him. Scenes like this one from the Antonine column in Rome must have been common, for the legionaries expected to be left free to plunder after a victory over the barbarians. Many a barbarian father was slain before the eyes of wife and child before they were sold as slaves.

After Caesar had driven Pompey's supporters from Italy, he followed them to the Greek peninsula where he defeated them at Pharsalus. Pompey then fled to Egypt where he was killed at the order of the reigning Ptolemy. When Caesar arrived shortly afterwards, he immediately became involved with the beautiful Cleopatra, sister of the young ruler. In the power struggle between the two, Caesar sided with Cleopatra and installed her upon the throne. Caesar then went on to defeat the armies still ranged against him in North Africa and Spain. When he returned to Rome, he was in a stronger position than any Roman had ever been before.

FROM CITY-STATE TO EMPIRE

One of the most important achievements of Augustus was the creation of a new professional army made up of twenty-eight legions of citizens. Each legion contained 6000 heavy infantry made up of sixty centuries of one hundred men, each commanded by an officer known as a centurion. The legion was the basic unit of the Roman army. Augustus also organized an equal number of smaller units composed of non-citizens who received citizenship at the end of their service. These units provided the army with such special troops as archers, cavalry and slingers. Many troops became highly skilled in the important task of building bridges (such as the log bridge shown here) to provide for the rapid crossing of streams and rivers.

In the east, Augustus began the slow process of bringing Galatia, Pontus and Judaea into the Empire. He ruled over Egypt directly as the successor of the Pharaoh. In the west his armies completed the conquest of the lands bordering the Danube. At the end of his reign three great rivers marked the boundaries of the Roman Empire: the Rhine, the Danube and the Euphrates.



growing power with increasing alarm. Hoping to gain control of Rome, he won the support of the Senate in opposition to Caesar. The conflict between the two former allies reached a peak in 49 B.C. The Senate ordered Caesar to disband his army after completing the conquest of Gaul. Caesar defiantly refused. Instead he made his own bid to control Rome. Crossing the Rubicon River from Gaul, he pushed almost unopposed through Italy. During the next few years, he crushed all opposition to him within the Roman world and greatly enlarged its extent. By 45 B.C. he had become the sole ruler of the Roman world.

During the short time he spent in Rome, Caesar accomplished a great deal. He founded new colonies where Rome's poor might find better opportunities. He planned great public works to make new jobs. He reformed the civil service and the system of local government. He introduced the Julian calendar, the forerunner of our own. But despite these and other reforms, Caesar made enemies among men who felt he was becoming too powerful. As he went to a meeting of the Senate on March 15, 44 B.C., a band of conspirators stabbed him to death.

The murder of Caesar solved nothing, for his assassins had no definite plans for the future. In the confusion that followed his death a second triumvirate arose consisting of Mark Antony, Caesar's friend; Octavian, Caesar's eighteen-year-old great nephew and heir; and Lepidus, an influential Roman politician. After destroying their enemies, the three divided the Roman world among them. As before, there developed a new struggle for power. Finally in 31 B.C., Octavian defeated his enemies and at the age of thirty-two became the sole master of the Roman world.

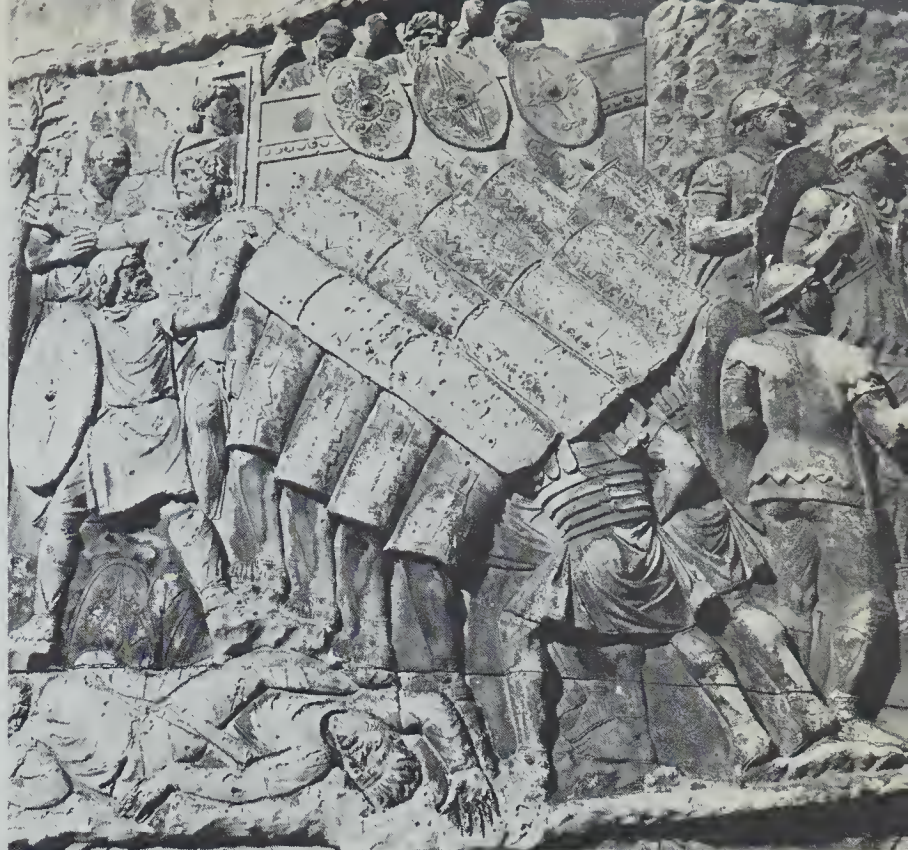
The triumph of Octavian, who took the new name Augustus in 27 B.C., ended a century of bloodshed and kept the Roman Empire from breaking up. It also marked the beginning of a great new period in Roman history. Augustus established a new system of government but made sure that it appeared much the same as the old. He knew very well that the old Republican government could not manage the affairs of a great

empire. Under his new system of imperial government, Augustus was the all powerful ruler of the whole Empire.

For forty-one years Augustus ran the affairs of Rome and the Empire efficiently. He developed a large civil service composed of able men, particularly from the lower classes. These men dealt with the day-to-day matters of government, and became increasingly important and influential. Augustus also carefully supervised his government officials in the provinces, where for years there had been complaints of corruption and injustice. He improved the finances of the Empire by introducing new taxes. He also reformed the system of tax collection. He launched a great building programme within Rome which not only provided work for many people but also beautified the city. He boasted, not without accuracy, "I found a Rome of brick and left it of marble." To ensure order and security in the city Augustus established for the first time a fire department and a police force.

Augustus was interested in more than material matters. To strengthen religion, he encouraged the worship of the old gods and spent great sums building new temples to them. To raise moral standards he had strict laws passed regulating personal conduct, punishing bachelors, discouraging luxury and encouraging large families. His vision was of a new Rome with the virtues of the old. If he was not successful in his aim, his efficient rule gave Rome peace, prosperity and cultural development. It was Augustus who more than anyone else laid the foundations for the greatness of Imperial Rome.

The eighty-four emperors who ruled after Augustus were a mixed lot. Some were able and efficient rulers who worked for the welfare of their subjects. Others had little ability. A few were downright villains. Perhaps the worst of these was Nero, who became Emperor at the age of sixteen. He is best remembered for his murders, including that of his mother, his persecution of the Christians and his madness. He is also accused of starting a great fire in Rome and then playing his fiddle while it burned. It is not certain that



Early in the second century A.D. the Roman Empire reached its greatest extent. By the year 100 a series of emperors had pushed the Roman occupation of Germany as far as the Main River and had gained control of Britain as far north as Scotland. Some of the most dramatic developments took place in the reign of Trajan. Between 100 and 106 he conquered and colonized Dacia, a region beyond the Danube, using tactics like those employed by the legionaries (above) who have linked their shields over their heads to provide protection against missiles thrown by defending Dacian soldiers. Somewhat later Trajan conquered Armenia and Parthia, thus pushing the imperial boundaries to the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.

he actually did this. But it seems likely that he was both evil enough and had sufficient musical talent! Nero loved nothing better than to sing and play the lyre in public. It would be impossible and tedious to list the names and achievements of each emperor. None of them made serious changes in the system of government established by Augustus. Like him they personally controlled the most important matters of state, the finances, the army and the growing civil service. But while the Roman citizens had little control over government, the system generally was efficient. For many years the people of Rome's great empire enjoyed the blessing of peace and considerable prosperity.



THE FALL OF ROME

By the end of the second century A.D., however, there were signs that all was not well with Rome. There were serious economic problems. Trade throughout the Empire had declined as small industries in towns and cities began to produce most of the goods their citizens needed. Since fewer people could make money from exchanging goods, there was a general decline in prosperity. A shortage of gold and silver from which to make coins speeded up the decline of trade. Agriculture was also in a weakened condition. Poor farming methods had exhausted the soil and therefore reduced the amount of food available. The food shortage came at the same time as the demand for food increased, for more people had moved from the country to enjoy the free bread and entertainment of the city. To make matters worse, as times became more difficult for most people, their taxes steadily increased.

Rome also faced serious political problems. The growth of the imperial system of government had left ordinary Roman citizens with no say in their government. As a result, they tended to lose their sense of pride and patriotism. The great mass of people in the cities had no concern for the future of the Empire. Even among wealthy aristocrats there seemed to be more interest in having a good time than in good government. At

The Emperor Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan, adopted a defensive rather than an offensive policy. One of his first acts was to give up Trajan's conquests east of the Euphrates. He felt that the cost of governing them would be too great a burden on the Empire's resources. His policy was to protect and improve existing provinces. In line with this policy he ordered the building of a great fortified wall across Britain from the mouth of the Tyne to the Solway Firth, to provide the Roman province with protection against wild tribes to the north. Known as Hadrian's Wall, the structure extended for seventy-three miles across the country and linked fourteen forts. At one-mile intervals this northern frontier of the Empire was manned by garrisons of one hundred men.

the very time when outstanding political leaders were most needed, Rome produced some of her very worst. One reason for this was the fact that there was no definite system for selecting emperors. Under the circumstances it was natural for the strongest power in the Empire to make the choice. That meant the army. For half a century, a number of emperors acted as little more than puppets worked by the troops who had put them in power. Army control led to lawlessness and the breakdown of the central government.

This political failure could not have happened at a worse time. On all sides barbarian invaders began to strike across the boundaries of Rome's empire into Gaul, Spain and the Balkans. One indication of Rome's decline is the fact that some barbarian troops were even invited into the Empire to help defend it against other barbarians.

Towards the end of the third, and in the early years of the fourth centuries, two emperors, Diocletian and Constantine, tried with some success to solve Rome's problems and halt its decline. Their method was to control and regulate every aspect of life within the Empire. They fixed the amount of wages a person might earn and set prices at which goods had to be sold. They made tenant farmers stay on the land in order to in-

crease food production and stop the flow of people to the cities. Others had to do whatever work the government directed, whether they wished to or not. Conditions improved, but the Empire became a police-state with an army of spies to report any signs of unrest and rebellion.

The reign of Constantine is remembered for two main developments. It was he who finally

From the end of the second century much of Rome's energy was spent trying to hold back invading barbarians on every frontier. This contemporary relief depicting the horrible fate of German prisoners suggests the brutality of Roman officers as well as the seriousness of the barbarian threat.



allowed Christianity to exist as a lawful religion and gave it an equal standing with other religions within the Empire. Constantine himself became a Christian in A.D. 337. By the end of the fourth century, Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire and the government even began to persecute pagans or unbelievers. From an insignificant cult that had appeared in Rome during the time of Augustus, Christianity had become the state religion.

Constantine also transferred his capital from Rome to Byzantium which he renamed Constantinople. This act was a recognition that the eastern territories were now much more important to the Roman Empire in every way than were those in the west. Towards the end of the fourth century the Empire was divided into two distinct parts, the Eastern Roman Empire called the Byzantine Empire with its capital at Constantinople, and the Western Roman Empire with its capital at Rome. The Eastern Empire lasted until the eleventh century, but the Western Empire soon fell. When historians speak of the "fall of Rome," they are referring to the fall of the Western, the least important, part of the Empire. Constantinople remained a strong centre of civilization long after Rome had fallen to invading barbarians.

The achievements of Diocletian and Constantine delayed, but they could not prevent, the collapse of the Western Empire. After they died, the old economic, political and military problems reappeared. In a way the new religion, Christianity, hastened the decline, for it taught men that the welfare of their souls was more important than saving the Empire. Historians still argue about the causes of Rome's collapse. While they cannot agree about which was most important, they admit that no one factor can explain the collapse. There were many causes and they were related. For example, the failure to control the army undoubtedly caused political breakdown. At the same time the army became more powerful because of weak political leadership.

At any rate, for a variety of reasons, the Western Empire by the beginning of the fifth century was in utter confusion. Faced by attacking barbarians in Gaul, Spain and Africa, it lay helpless. Finally in A.D. 410 Rome itself was sacked by barbarian Visigoths. When a German became Emperor in A.D. 476, it was clear that the Western Roman Empire was at an end. This did not mean the destruction of the civilization Rome had developed. It continued to flourish in the East, and the barbarians themselves adopted much of the civilization of the people they had defeated.

The Roman achievement

A great historian once wrote that if he had to choose a time in history when the human race was happiest he would pick the period between A.D. 96 and 180. Not everyone would agree with this choice. But there is no doubt that for a great many of the 70 to 90 million people in the forty-three provinces of Rome's empire, life during the first two centuries was good. It was a time of general peace and stability known as the *Pax Romana*. In some respects it was the closest men have ever come to achieving the ideal of one united world. As one poet expressed it, "Rome had made a city where once there was a world." It was not a great exaggeration, for Rome's empire at its height included most of what was known of the Western world. And despite its great size, the Empire had many of the qualities of a closely-knit city. From the Atlantic shores of Spain in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east, and from Hadrian's Wall in Britain to Egypt in the south, people lived under one system of government, used the same kind of money and were protected by a common Roman law. Linking the far-flung parts of the Empire physically were 50,000 miles of the finest roads built until very recent times.

THE GOVERNMENT OF AN EMPIRE

It was during the reign of Augustus that the main features of imperial government for Rome and the Empire were gradually set up. For the 200 years that followed, the system remained, with only a few changes. Augustus knew when he seized power in Rome that the system of government under the Republic was unsatisfactory. While the Republican system had worked well for a small city-state, it was incapable of ruling so vast a territory as Rome had become. Signs of weakness were everywhere. For a hundred years Romans had fought each other in bloody civil wars. The army was unreliable. Senators were often lazy and dishonest. In many parts of the Empire subject peo-



Augustus, meaning the "revered one," was the name conferred on Gaius Octavius in 27 B.C. when he became the real ruler of Rome. Octavius, the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar, was born in Rome in 63 B.C. and was adopted by Caesar in 44 B.C. Augustus was handsome and dignified, and despite his great power had a very modest manner. His favourite motto apparently was "Make haste slowly." Although he lived until A.D. 14, he never enjoyed good health.

ples increasingly resented the bad government of Roman officials. Clearly, Rome needed a strong ruler who could restore honest and efficient government at home and bring order and justice to the provinces of Rome's growing empire. Augustus understood Rome's problems and believed that he could cure them. Yet he also knew that the Romans would not submit happily to the government of a dictator based on military power alone. Aware of their respect for the old habits and traditions, Augustus tried to establish his position on the basis of law. He hoped to obtain all of the power he needed, while at the same time keeping the forms or machinery of the old system of government.

His first move came in 27 B.C. After having put an end to the fighting within Rome, he dramatically gave up all of his powers to the people and the Senate. He was, he claimed, restoring the Republic. But the Senate, fearing renewed violence, quickly gave Augustus many official positions and titles which carried with them great powers. For example, they gave him control of the consuls and assemblies, the army, the state religion and many of the provinces in the Empire. The Senate also declared that Augustus was *princeps* or the first citizen of Rome. It was no empty title, for it carried with it such prestige that the *princeps* or emperor was the real power in the state. No other individual or group had nearly as much authority.

The system of imperial government worked out by Augustus continued almost unchanged for the next two centuries, during which the Roman Empire was at its peak. The emperors who followed Augustus exercised almost complete control over Rome. Yet on the surface it seemed that he had restored the ancient Republic. In theory, all power still came from the people and the Senate. Officials were still elected to the old offices of state. Senators met as they always had, although increasingly they played little active part in government. The assemblies came together on occasion. But while the names and forms remained the same, the old institutions of the Republic lacked any real authority. Their main job was to act as

rubber stamps, granting each emperor his great powers at the beginning of his reign and legalizing his decrees.

Great powers alone did not ensure good government. The emperor needed loyal and able servants to help him in the actual running of the state. Here again Augustus had taken the lead by creating a well organized and efficient civil service. Like any modern civil service, that of imperial Rome was organized into departments which were responsible for such matters as finance and justice. At the head of each department was a senior official of ability and experience. Usually he was a member of the equites or knights, though he might be a senator. Under him were a host of lesser officials with clearly stated duties to perform. Most of these men were capable plebeians or even educated slaves. The entire civil service was controlled from a central office in Rome, which was responsible to the emperor. At its best, throughout the second century, the civil service was efficient and honest and served the Empire well.

Just as important as the civil service was the army, upon which the safety of the Empire depended. For the first two centuries after the establishment of the Empire the Roman legions were an unbreakable shield against invasion. In the minds of most men it was unthinkable that the Roman army could ever be defeated. In many ways the army, like the civil service, was the creation of Augustus. He had built a permanent professional army. It was made up of men who enlisted for long periods of sixteen to twenty years. For such men, the army was no part-time job. It was a permanent profession which paid them well and provided them with good pensions at the end of their service. Discipline was strict, but by and large, the officers were able and just. And there was great satisfaction in serving with men who had good reason to be proud of their fighting ability. The main core of the army was made up of Roman citizens, but an increasing number of auxiliary troops were recruited from among Rome's subjects in the provinces outside Italy.



The army's main job was to expand and protect the frontiers of the Empire and to quell any signs of rebellion within it. Thus, most of the units were scattered widely throughout the Empire and far from Rome itself. Every legionary on the frontiers had experienced scenes like this, with the enemy fighting fiercely to protect his home from destruction and looting by the armies of the Empire. To defend the heart of the Empire, Augustus raised a new force of hand-picked men known as the Praetorian Guard. These 9000 men were the only soldiers permanently stationed in Italy, and when the Empire began to decline they added to the confusion by often controlling the appointment and activities of the emperors.

All things considered, though, during the first two centuries of the Empire the army defended it well, despite the fact that it contained only about 350,000 men in all. Later, however, when invaders struck in force from many different quarters, it became clear that the troops were spread too thinly for adequate defence.

While Roman soldiers protected the provinces and maintained order, governors appointed by the emperor ruled over them. Augustus had also taken the first steps to improve the system of government in the provinces. To reduce dishonesty and disorder, he chose governors carefully on the basis of ability and character and paid them good salaries. Then he kept a watchful eye on their conduct. He appointed a special body of tax collectors who were directly responsible to the emperor and had to give a detailed account of their work. As a result of such policies, the government of the provinces during the first two centuries was generally efficient, orderly and honest.

One reason for the success of Rome's policy towards the provinces was the freedom given local communities to run their own affairs. Emperors encouraged the development of city-states throughout the Empire. In each city-state, local officials looked after such day-to-day matters as policing, courts, public buildings and the collection of local taxes. But while the emperors encour-

aged such activities, they did not hesitate to interfere when they found local policies in conflict with the interests of Rome. These occasions showed clearly that the final authority throughout the Roman Empire rested with the emperor at Rome.

Although the emperors during the first two centuries had almost unlimited powers, they were not usually tyrants. Most of them had a strong sense of duty and believed that their power should be used for the good of their subjects. A deep respect for the law also kept emperors from misusing their powers.

Among the greatest glories of Rome was its law. It is impossible to talk about Roman government without also considering Roman law. From the earliest times the Romans believed that a state could not exist without laws. At first the Roman law was simply unwritten custom. For more than a thousand years it was changed and modified. Eventually it developed into a complicated code of laws which has influenced the legal systems of

almost every country in the Western world. Our very word “justice” comes from the Roman word for law, *ius*. Many people believe that Rome’s most enduring contribution to Western civilization was her law.

About 450 B.C., after demands from the plebeians, the early customs of Rome were first brought together and written down in the Twelve Tables. The Tables were drawn up to meet the needs of Roman citizens living in a small agricultural community. They were concerned with what we call civil matters — property rights, wills, the conduct of citizens and the rights of individuals. At that time, however, even murder was considered a civil matter, and it was up to the relatives of the murdered person to take legal action against the murderer. It was not until the period of the late Empire that there developed a definite code of laws to deal with criminal matters. These laws were based on the notion that a crime such as murder was an offence against the state and that it was the duty of the state to bring the accused to justice.

Although Roman law continued to be based on the Twelve Tables, it changed and grew as Rome itself changed and expanded. Sometimes changes occurred as the result of acts of the assemblies or Senate, or through decisions of emperors. An even more important source of “new” law were the rulings of judges. Eventually these judgements created a large body of “case law” based on precedent, the decisions of judges in previous similar cases.

In addition to this case law, there gradually developed a body of law to govern the subject peoples of Rome’s empire. This was known as *ius gentium* or the law of the nations, in contrast to the *ius civile* or the civil law which applied only to Roman citizens. However, by the third century, when Rome had given citizenship to most people in the Empire, there were repeated attempts to create a single law that would be the same for all parts of the Empire. The most famous of the legal codes which attempted to organize the whole body of Roman law was completed by the Eastern Emperor Justinian in the sixth century. This



Intelligent and industrious, Justinian (A.D. 527-565) was the greatest of the Byzantine emperors. In addition to his legal reforms, he tried with some success to reconquer the lost or western half of the Roman Empire. He added North Africa, Italy south of the Alps, the Mediterranean islands and part of Spain to the Eastern Empire. But his campaigns left the state so exhausted financially and militarily that it was not able to resist later invaders from east and west. Justinian also tried to strengthen and unify the Christian Church. (Christianity by now was the official religion of the Empire.) He believed that unity in religion was necessary to the well-being of the state. But he was unable to end the religious disputes which constantly threatened to weaken the Byzantine Empire. One of his greatest achievements was the building of Santa Sophia, one of the world’s most beautiful churches, and long regarded as one of the wonders of the world.

unified system of Roman law was known as the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* or Body of the Civil Law. Many scholars believe that Rome's chief contribution to Western civilization has been the principles and ideas contained in such legal codes as Justinian's. Certainly, there is scarcely a nation in the Western world that has not been influenced in some way by the Roman law. Oddly enough, Justinian's code was completed some fifty years after the western part of the Roman Empire had collapsed before the barbarians.

The Romans were the first to admit that their law was not perfect. Then, as now, some judges were incompetent and some punishments brutal and absurd. The Romans recognized the need for continuing efforts to improve the law so that it could best serve the needs of all men. They recognized also that changing conditions often required changes in the law, but they felt that there were certain principles that must always be upheld. It was these principles, rather than any particular laws, that have made the Roman law important to us. Among the most important of these was the belief that justice must be impartial, that it must be the same for everyone, rich as well as poor. Other Roman principles that still form a part of most law codes in the Western world are the right of an accused person to defend himself before he can be convicted; the need for the prosecution to prove guilt rather than for the accused to prove his innocence; freedom of conscience, or the right of a person to think what he wishes.

Among the many blessings of the people who

lived within the boundaries of Rome's empire then, the greatest was probably the enjoyment of a common Roman law. The law protected the rights of everyone, not only against individuals but against the state itself. It gave orphans and slaves some protection against inhuman treatment. The law was the basis of the humane system of government which united millions of people of different races and kept them at peace.

LIFE IN THE EMPIRE

Sound government encouraged prosperity within the Empire. Most of its inhabitants made their living by farming, which provided the economic foundation of the Empire. There was a steady demand for the products of the soil. People of the growing cities needed food, as did the soldiers of every province. Agricultural production was also stimulated by the technical skill of the Romans. In almost every part of the Empire they increased the amount of land under cultivation. In Egypt they increased the size of the harvests by improving the ancient methods of agriculture. In many other parts of Africa they raised crops on land which today is parched and unproductive.

The most prosperous agricultural units were

The large estates, each one with its magnificent villa, were not confined to Italy itself. They existed in Gaul (France) and Britain, and in the territories conquered by the Romans in Africa and the Near East. This Roman mosaic shows a villa in Tunisia in North Africa.



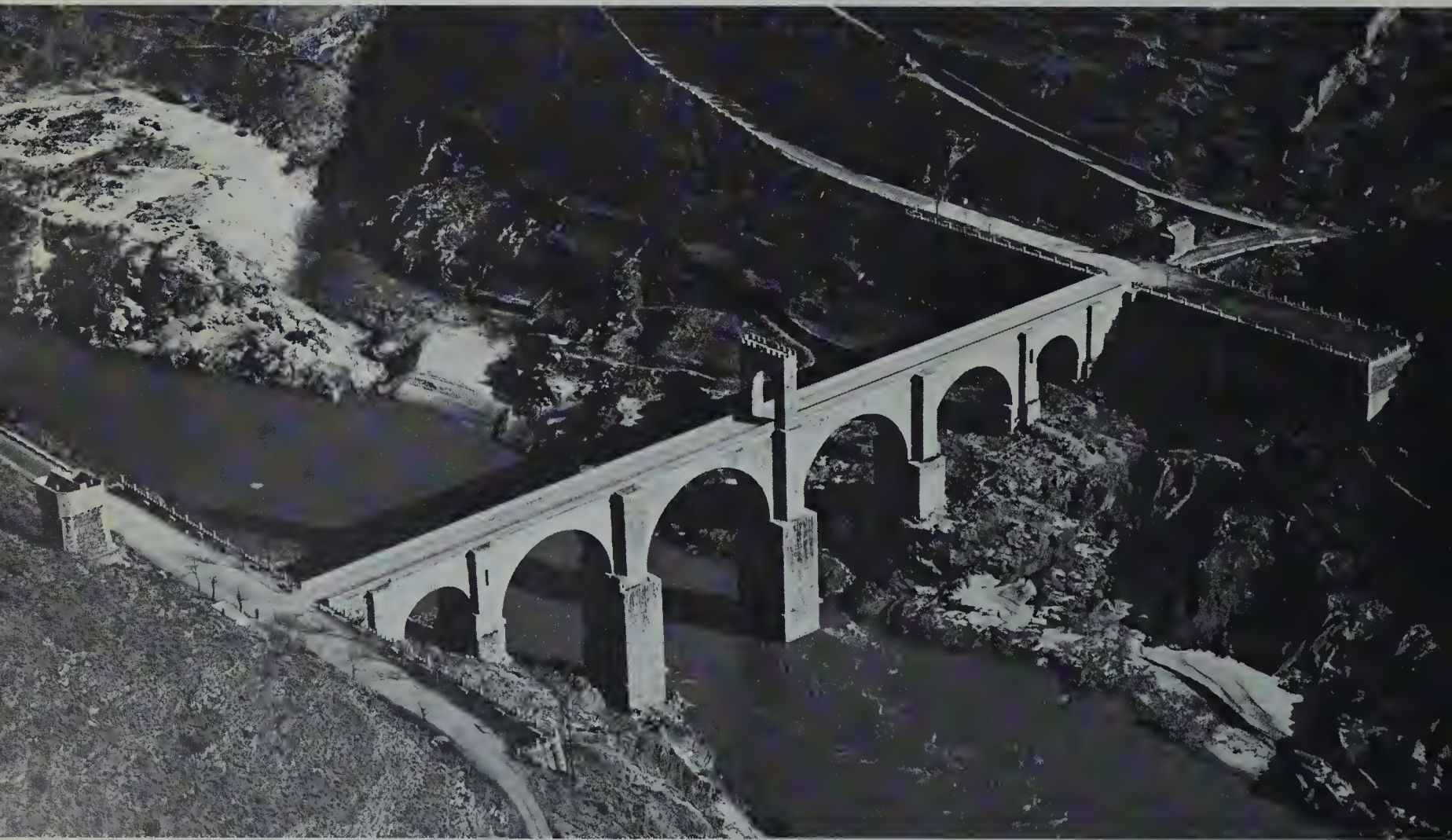


The oldest and most famous of all Roman roads was the Appian Way. Begun in 312 B.C., the Appian Way headed in a straight line south towards Capua, defying hills and marshes. Roads like this linked the hub of the Empire with its outposts on the Rhine, the Danube and far-away Britain. Mileposts along the road indicated the distance to Rome or to the nearest provincial capital.

That rivers were no obstacle to Roman engineers is clearly seen in this modern picture of a magnificent Roman bridge spanning a river in Spain.

the large estates owned by rich landowners. Such men concentrated on the large-scale production of grain, grapes, olives and cattle. This made it more difficult for small landowners to survive. Thus, more of these small farmers were forced to give up their land and work as tenants on the big estates. The estates often became industrial units as well, manufacturing and selling such products as pottery and utensils to the surrounding countryside and to nearby cities.

Much of the Empire's prosperity was due to a tremendous increase in trade and industry. Many factors stimulated the rise of trade. Good government and peace meant that merchants could travel safely throughout the Empire. A single money system which Augustus had established for the whole Empire made the exchange of goods easy. There were practically no customs barriers or taxes between districts, so that trade could move freely from one province to another. Differences in language presented few problems, for Latin



was generally understood in the west, as was Greek in the east. Furthermore, excellent roads and sea lanes provided a first-rate system of communications.

Roman roads were of immense importance in trade. Originally built to make the movement of troops fast and easy, the roads soon carried a flourishing commerce. Early in the second century about 50,000 miles of roads stretched from the Tigris River in the east to Spain in the west. In Britain alone, on the very outskirts of the Empire, there were 6500 miles of highway, the best roads Britain was to know until the eighteenth century. The roads were engineering and technological marvels, rightly regarded as Rome's greatest single physical accomplishment. A typical Roman road was forty feet wide and from three to five feet thick. It was constructed with layers of stone, the cracks between them filled with a mortar over a gravel surface. Perhaps Rome's greatest contribution to technology was the invention and

use of concrete. Roman roads were crowned or rounded on top to allow water to run off; drainage ditches ensured that the foundations would not crumble. In their attempts to make the roads as straight as possible, Roman engineers bridged valleys and swamps and cut through mountains. Many of their roads do not vary from a straight line more than half a mile over a twenty-mile stretch. Built to last, many Roman roads, particularly in southern Europe, are still in use today.

Along with the roads, the sea lanes also helped to increase trade and commerce. The Roman navy policed the seaways so effectively that goods moved safely by sea from all parts of the Empire. So thoroughly did the navy control the Mediterranean that during the first two centuries of the Empire, it did not have to fight a single major battle. Piracy almost ceased to exist. There is no doubt that much of the Empire's prosperity was due to the navy's control of the Mediterranean Sea.



A Roman relief (above) shows ships at sea. Below, the owner of a grain ship watches the loading of his vessel before it sets out for Rome or some other great city in the Empire.



THE ROMAN ACHIEVEMENT

In addition to these factors, trade naturally expanded as the Empire grew during the first century after its establishment. Within a short time traders carried a wide variety of goods over the Empire's roads and seaways. The newly won territories in North Africa and Europe provided new sources of raw materials, as well as some manufactured articles and an abundance of slaves. At the same time they bought some luxury articles from Rome. From Britain came supplies of tin and leather. Gaul sent pottery, rough textiles and wine. More important than any of the other western territories was Spain whose mines produced immensely valuable gold, silver, copper, lead and iron. The Spanish provinces were also important sources of timber, grain, olives and rope.

In the east, Egypt became a very important part of the Empire's trading system and economic life. Each year from the Nile granary came some 20,000,000 bushels of grain to feed the growing population of Italian cities.

The great port of Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile became a bustling centre of commerce, second only to Rome itself. Through its harbour passed goods — grain, wine and tools — on their way to Arabia, East Africa and the Far East. West-bound through Alexandria came such luxury products as ivory and tortoise shell from Africa, perfumes, spices and pearls from India, and even silk from China. It took silk about a year to reach the Roman world by Persia and India, and it required a pound of gold to purchase a pound of



silk. Although there is evidence of considerable contact between Roman merchants and Indians and Chinese, there is no indication that Roman civilization had much effect upon, or was itself influenced by, the civilizations of the Far East.

The growth of trade and industry was reflected by the growth of cities. The older cities of the eastern part of the Empire had been centres of civilization for a long time. During the *Pax Romana* many of them rivalled Rome in importance. In addition to Alexandria, such cities as Antioch, the capital of Syria, Corinth and Constantinople became even larger and more prosperous urban centres than they had been. In the more backward provinces of the Western Empire new kinds of cities developed under Roman direction. Some-

times former military camps became centres of trade, industry and civilized life. In Britain, the Latin word for camp, *castra*, survives in names like Manchester and Lancaster. In many ways the new cities of the west were “little Romes” built according to a standard Roman plan. The market place, known as the forum, stood at the centre of each town. Beyond it were temples, guild-halls, and a senate house – centres of religious, commercial and political life. Each town could usually boast an assortment of theatres, gymnasia, baths and libraries. The orderly design of the main streets would have delighted a modern town planner. A good water supply and system of sanitation were taken for granted. Indeed, Rome’s famous sewer, the *Cloaca Maxima*, is still in use.

The city: Rome and Pompeii

Although great cities dotted the Roman Empire, the greatest by far was Rome itself. The centre of government, trade and religion was the Roman *Forum*, the ruins of which can be seen here. In the early days of the city the Forum was largely a commercial centre, but around its edges arose the oldest temples in the city. Next came such buildings as the Senate House. Eventually the Forum became the political centre of Rome.

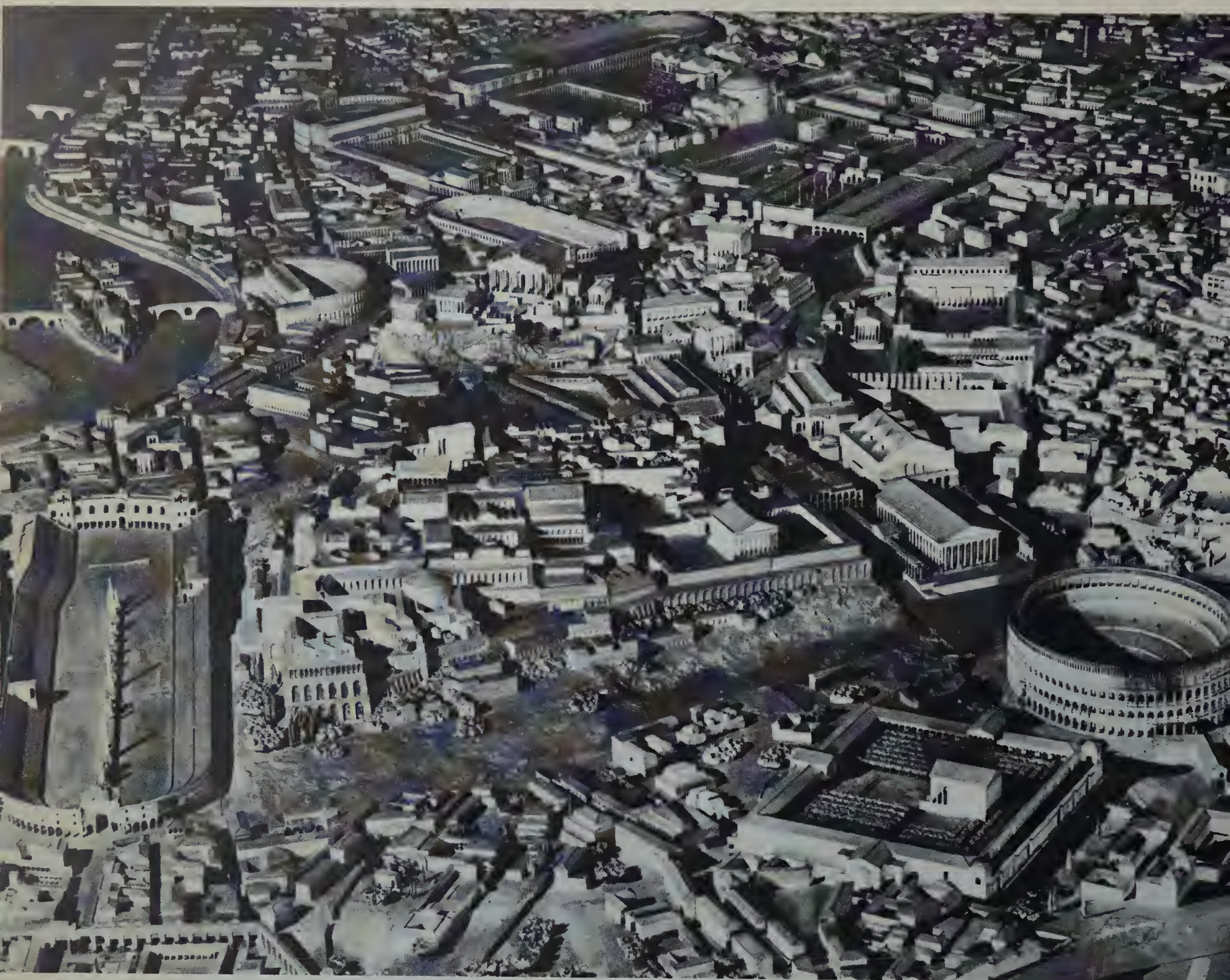
In the left foreground can be seen part of the Arch dedicated to the Emperor Tiberius. Through the Arch ran the *Via Sacra*, along which great processions made their way through the Forum. The building (to the left of the *Via Sacra*) with the marble columns and broad stairs is the temple of Antoninus and Faustina, built in honour of the Emperor Antoninus Pius and his wife. In the right foreground stand columns from the

temple of Saturn, which housed the state treasury.

In his comedy, *Curculio*, the Roman writer Plautus provided a fascinating picture of life in the Forum. The description has been retold by De Ruggiero, an expert on the Forum: “There is the famous scene in which the poet takes the spectator through the best known parts of the Forum and its immediate neighbourhood, pointing out the characteristics of each, as represented in the people who frequented it. There in the *Comitium* where the judges sit and the orators make their speeches from the platform, you can see the perjurers, the liars, the braggarts . . . ; beside the shops, old and new, in front of the basilica are the strumpets, the bankers, the usurers, the brokers; in the lowest part of the Forum, the serious-minded and the gentlemen who conduct themselves quietly . . . ; higher up are the gossips and

scandal-mongers . . . everywhere the rabble of idle vagabonds, the men about town – the type that are either deep in gaming or spreading false rumours . . . and with them those credulous and simple-minded people who crowd the Forum and Comitium in time of crisis, when fantastic portents are being reported, to hear exactly where a rain of blood or milk has fallen, or what remains of the immense swarm of bees that was seen overhead, and to prognosticate good news or bad if there is a rainbow or three suns appear above the temple of Saturn. . . .”

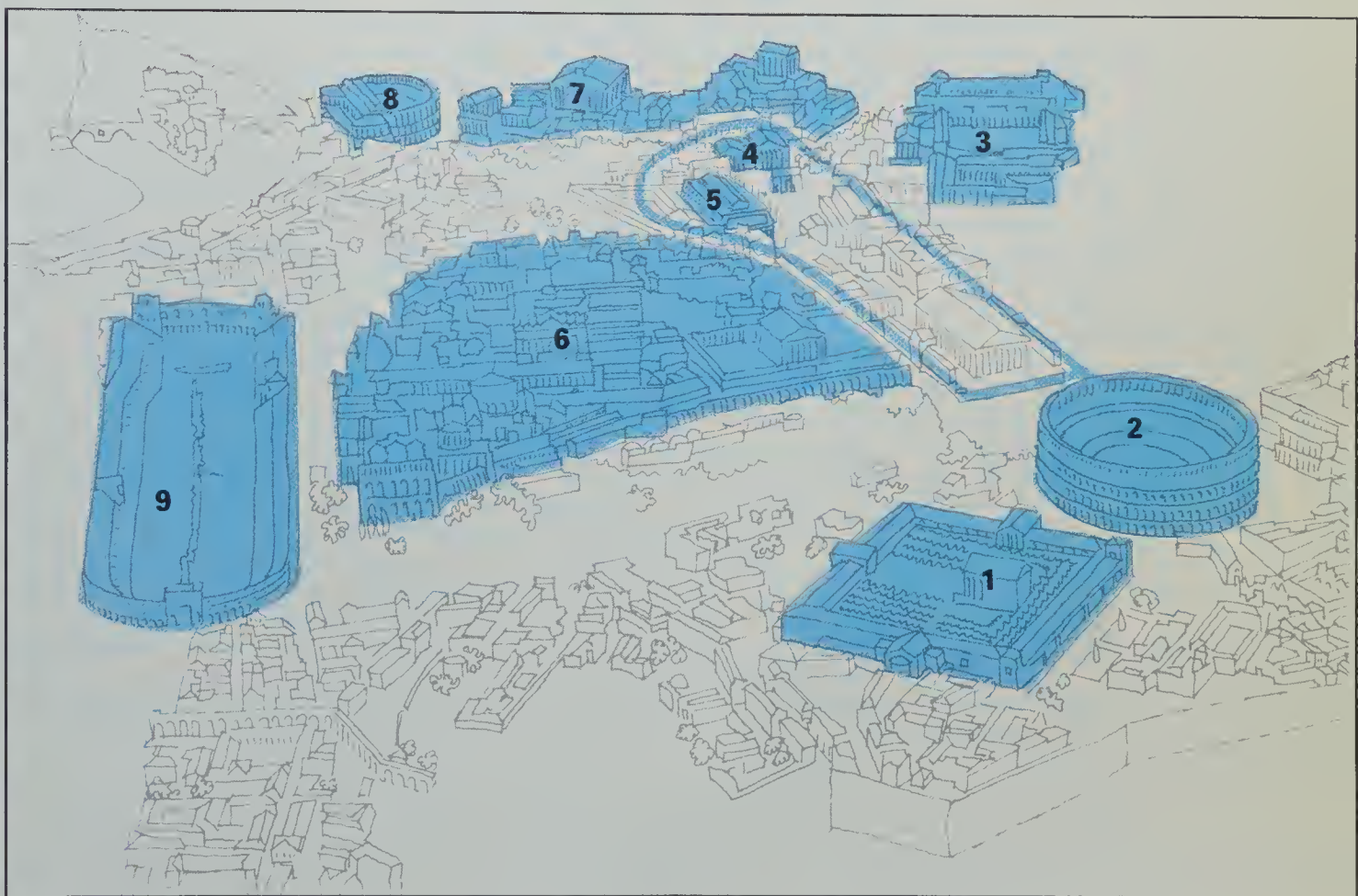
The Forum also witnessed many of the most dramatic events in the history of ancient Rome: the assassination of Caesar, Mark Antony’s speech in honour of Caesar, Cicero’s famous speeches, and the great parades of victorious generals who marched up the *Via Sacra* at the head of their troops.



Since by the time of Caesar the old Roman Forum was too small, the new "forum of Caesar" was begun. Augustus prided himself on the new public buildings he had constructed and the old ones he had restored. Later emperors added a host of magnificent buildings. By the fourth century, Imperial Rome, from the air, would have looked much like the model here. Dominating the new heart of the city was the gigantic *Colosseum*, built by Emperor Vespasian and his son Titus between A.D. 70 and 80 on a site formerly

used by Nero for a lake in his villa. While the Colosseum could seat almost 50,000 people it was dwarfed by the *Circus Maximus* which had 300,000 seats. The scene of chariot races, gladiator fights and mock battles between thousands of soldiers, the Circus was almost as dangerous for spectators as for performers. It was destroyed by fire several times, and the banks of seats collapsed at least twice, killing 1112 people on the first occasion and 13,000 on another. Up from the Colosseum is the Roman Forum

with the *Basilica Julia* shown at the far end. Beyond that lies the sacred Capitoline Hill with the temple of Jupiter. On the edge of the Forum was the Palatine Hill, where Rome was supposed to have been founded by Romulus. Augustus moved his residence there in 44 B.C. Thereafter almost all the emperors lived there, so that the Hill became one immense royal palace. Other striking buildings which graced the new forum were the Temple of Claudius, the theatre of Marcellus, and Trajan's Forum.



1. Temple of Claudius
2. Colosseum
3. Trajan's Forum
4. Curia (Senate House)
5. Basilica Julia
6. Palatine Hill
7. Capitoline Hill
8. Theatre of Marcellus
9. Circus Maximus



The tragedy of Pompeii

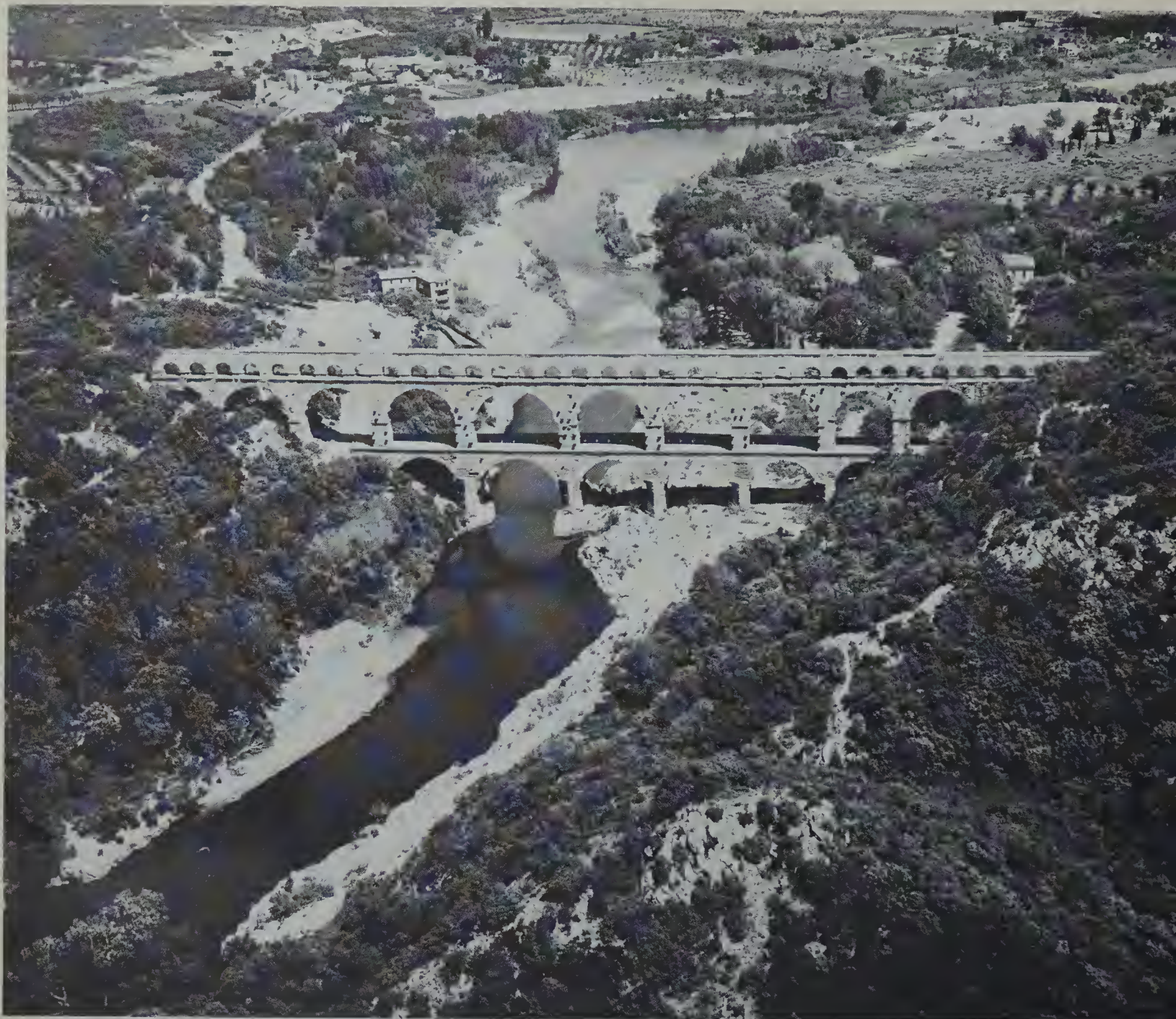
A tragedy almost 2000 years ago made it possible for us to walk down the streets and into the homes and shops of an ancient Roman city. In A.D. 79 Mount Vesuvius, in southern Italy, erupted and buried the town of Pompeii and many of its 20,000 inhabitants under twenty feet of lava and ash. A century ago the work of rediscovery began. As the ash and lava were removed, streets and homes, shops and public baths, and even the skeletons of

people who were buried alive or suffocated were found just as they had been on that fateful afternoon in August.

Pompeii was not a large city; it has been compared to a reasonably prosperous suburb of a large modern city. Like all Roman cities it had a forum, seen here with Vesuvius rising menacingly in the background. Along the paved streets were a wide variety of shops in which lived the merchants and artisans. Behind some of them were bakeries like the one seen (p. 39)

with its ovens and millstones. The wealthier inhabitants, however, had separate homes. A typical house was enclosed within high windowless walls and the inhabitants enjoyed complete privacy. The house centred on an open courtyard, usually decorated with a fountain and statues. Inside, the walls were decorated with vivid paintings. (The painting of Alexander at Issus came from a home in Pompeii.) Even behind the water trough can be seen the outline of what once was a colourful wall painting.





To supply water to the cities of the Empire the Romans constructed aqueducts, some of which were built on two or three tiers of arches. Rome, for example, received its water supply from eleven aqueducts which ran from ten to fifty miles and carried about 25,000,000 gallons of water a day. The famous aqueduct at Segovia, Spain, still

provides part of the city's water supply. More famous is the Pont du Gard, seen here, a combined aqueduct and bridge over the Gard River in southern France. Built in the first century B.C., the Pont du Gard is about 900 feet long and towers 160 feet above the ground. The lowest tier is still used as a bridge.

EVERYDAY LIFE IN ROME

Roman society was made of up definite classes, but the barriers between them were not rigid. It was possible for someone at the bottom of the social ladder to move to the top. For example, the brilliant Roman general, Marius, was the son of a small plebeian farmer. Early Roman society had been dominated by wealthy landowners. During the period of the early Empire, however, the aristocracy expanded. The top level of society now included not only rich landowners, but also leaders in business and commerce and important government officials. Into the ranks of this new nobility came non-native Romans — Spaniards, Africans, Greeks, Gauls and even Britons.

Below this upper class was a group which included smaller landowners, and artisans of all kinds, usually organized into guilds. Thus, there were, for example, metal workers' guilds and physicians' guilds. In some respects the guilds resembled trade unions, charging dues, bargaining for higher wages and sometimes even striking. Also included in this group were shop owners and minor officials. Lowest in the social scale were the unemployed members of the city mobs, the agricultural workers, and, at the very bottom, the astonishingly large number of slaves.

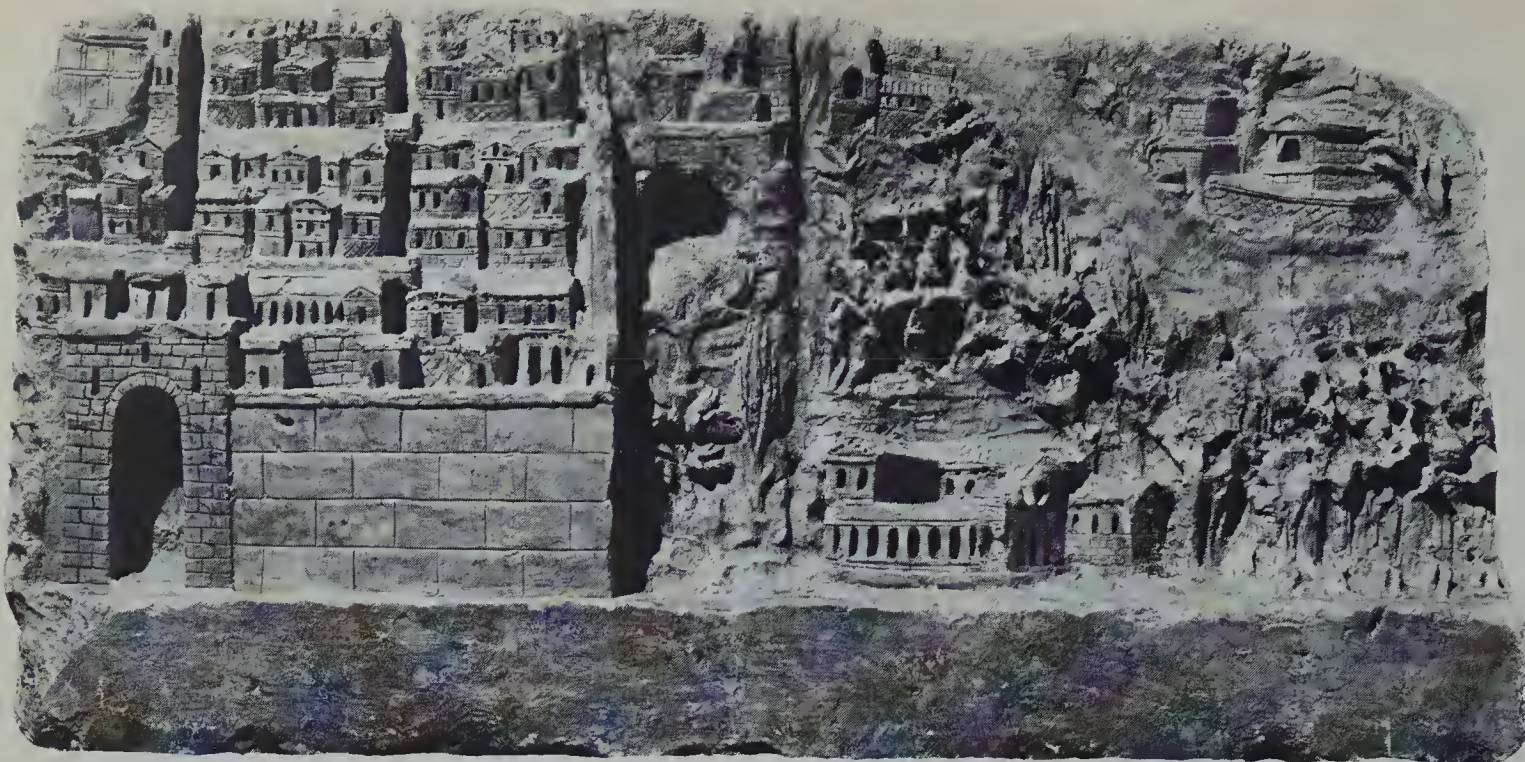
Depending upon one's social class, life in the Empire could be very pleasant or extremely difficult. For the wealthy it was a good life. In addition to a large and luxurious town house with running water and central heating, a rich Roman would often have a great sprawling estate or a villa in the country. A villa often had a sunny promenade for strolling, an aviary filled with rare birds, a fish pond, a wrestling ground and a garden filled with ivy-covered Greek statues, often hastily created by sculptors of little skill.

Food merchants grew prosperous simply by meeting the needs of their wealthy clients. Always there was a demand for newer delicacies. Among the favorite dishes was whole roast boar, carried from the kitchen by four or five slaves, or roast peacock served on a silver tray decorated with the peacock's tail feathers. A not unusual meal might include whole fish cooked in a sea of shrimp,

meats with spiced vegetables, meats with sauces, oysters with sauces, pigeons and broiled black-birds, Spanish wildfowl stuffed with Indian rice, peaches from Persia and Greek wine drunk from golden goblets. A dinner party was a great event customarily lasting several hours and often accompanied by professional entertainment. At length the guests arose, often pale from over-eating, depending upon their slaves to help them stagger safely home.

Only a small number within the Empire enjoyed the pleasures which wealth could buy. The poor and unemployed lived in crowded conditions with few material comforts. Most of Rome's population lived in slum-like conditions on the streets or in fire-trap tenements. These box-like structures were often six storeys high and frequently collapsed or burned to the ground. A walk at night through the mud-filled alleys of the poor districts of Rome was no exercise for a sensible person. Poverty, hunger and suffering had made such areas rabbit warrens of every imaginable kind of crime. Without work, the mob depended upon the state for food. Every month they lined up for the wooden tickets which would entitle them to free grain from the state. The state also provided them with amusement, no doubt hoping to keep them from rebelling against their hopeless conditions. Roman writers constantly expressed their contempt for these unfortunate creatures whose only interest in life was "bread and circuses."

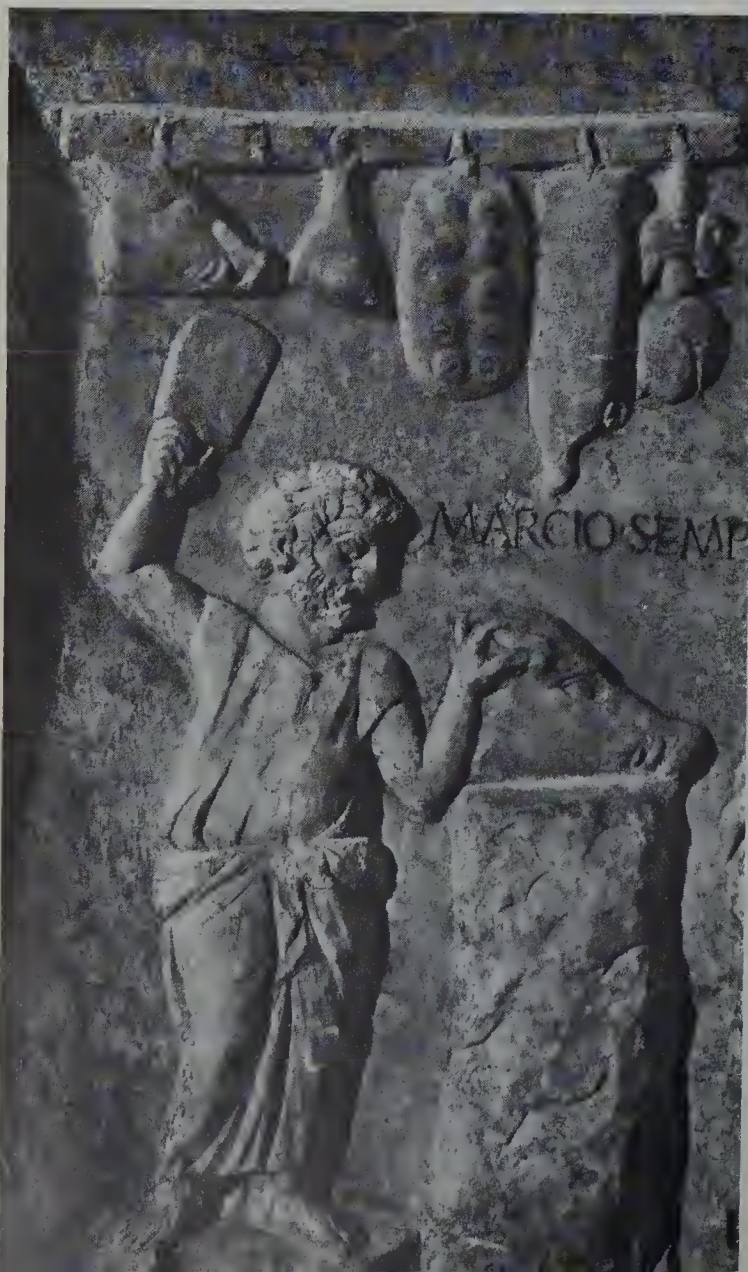
During the Empire there were more than a hundred holidays a year in Rome. On these days emperors, public officials or rich men staged their famous public shows or circuses. In Rome the greatest stadia were the Colosseum which could hold 50,000 people and the Circus Maximus where a quarter of a million spectators could cheer the violent spectacles. The main event at the Circus was the chariot race, in which teams of horses pulled their light vehicles around a tight track at breakneck speed. Although accidents were common, the chariot races were good clean fun compared with many other events. At least the participants in these races were not matched against unequal opponents.



Romans at work

A Roman relief shows a small Roman town, with the homes resembling modern two- and three-storey apartment buildings separated by narrow streets.

A Roman butcher is seen here at work on the head of a pig. The rest of the animal hangs on hooks behind him.

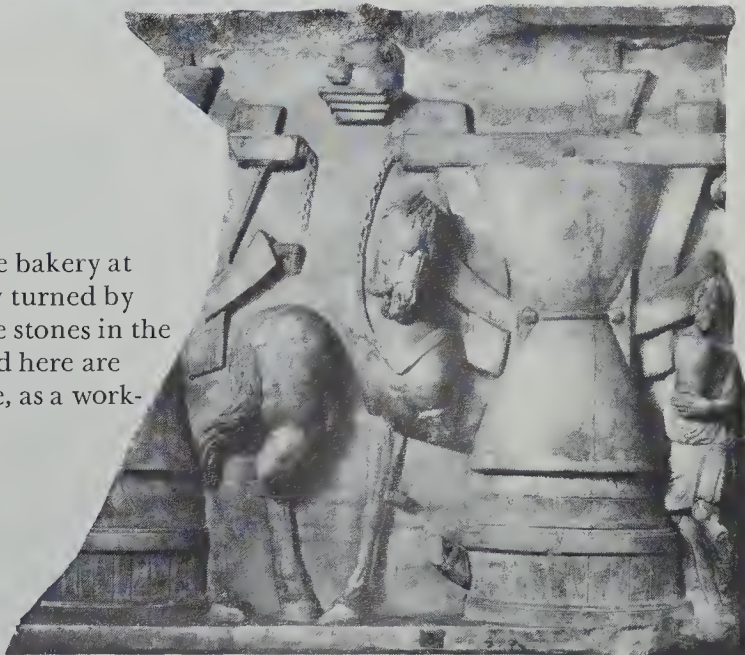


A shopkeeper displays his ware of cutlery, including small sickles and knives, to a customer.



A draper and his assistant hold up a bolt of cloth for inspection by two wealthy customers and their slaves. Clothing was not bought ready-made in Rome.

The millstones in the bakery at Pompeii were probably turned by slaves or workmen. The stones in the large flour-mill pictured here are being turned by a horse, as a workman collects the flour.



Two workmen pull a small boat loaded with wine along an internal waterway in Italy or the Empire, as a third steers.







The furious excitement of the chariot race was captured in this contemporary relief. The four-horse chariots raced around the Circus Maximus as frenzied onlookers cheered them on. The charioteers were the great sports heroes of the day. One of the greatest, a man named Diletes, entered 4257 races, finishing first 1462 times and winning the equivalent of more than a million dollars.



Before the contests began, the gladiators marched in front of the emperor's seat and shouted "Hail Emperor, we who are about to die, salute you." Gladiators who were reluctant to fight were spurred into action by trainers armed with whips and red-hot pokers, much as a quiet bull is spurred on in a modern bull fight. Victorious gladiators sometimes became popular heroes; after a long string of victories such a hero might be awarded a wooden sword, the symbol of his freedom. Few were so fortunate. Gladiators wounded in combat could ask for mercy by dropping their shields and raising their arms. As a rule the spectators decided, basing their decision upon how well he had fought. The emperor made the final gesture that determined his fate. Thumbs down meant death. In one year the Emperor Claudius set 19,000 criminals at each other's throats, and in four months Trajan displayed 10,000 gladiators to celebrate his military victories. The gladiator fights and the inhuman struggles between men and wild animals were held in the giant Colosseum. As the modern ruins show (page 46), the area below the floor of the Colosseum was a network of cells and cages where people and animals were kept until it was their turn to appear before the bloodthirsty crowd.

Among the most brutal events were the gladiator fights. The gladiators were usually specially trained slaves or criminals who often fought to the death in the arena before the shrieking crowds. Gladiators normally fought in the afternoons, after business hours, so that everyone could attend the show. Animal events were held in the mornings. Sometimes these were harmless and amusing. Trained monkeys drove chariots, and elephants performed such tricks as kneeling and writing with their trunks. Then there were contests which pitted animals against animals—bears against buffalo, for example, or elephants fighting with rhinoceros. Often, men fought against wild and starving animals, either in single combat or in contests involving groups of men and packs of animals. So many beasts were slaughtered — as many as 5000 in a single day — that armies of hunters were kept busy hunting new supplies. Capturing wild animals alive was no easy task, but the Romans became so skilful at it that some species were almost wiped out.

A popular activity was to send men and women, particularly early Christians, into the arenas to be torn apart by the beasts. The evil emperor Nero began such large-scale persecution following a great fire in the year A.D. 64. He decided to blame the fire on the Christians, the innocent though troublesome followers of the strange religion which had begun in Palestine and which was spreading throughout the Empire. On Nero's orders, great numbers of Christians were thrown to the lions to entertain the howling Roman masses. Others were crucified or dipped into pitch and set afire to illuminate the night chariot races. Other emperors followed Nero's savage example. But despite the persecution the number of Christians continued to grow.

Brutality was not confined to the arenas. Many a condemned criminal found himself on the stage of a theatre playing the part of an actor who had been condemned to death in a play. Instead of watching the tame spectacle of an actor pretending to be killed, the audience was treated to the real thing as the criminal was often tortured and killed before their eyes. Such ghastly entertain-



In their architecture the Romans loved size for its own sake. Most of their work is impressive because of the size and scale. Few better illustrations of Roman architecture can be given than the picture of the arch of Constantine (above) or this modern photograph of the Colosseum seen through the Arch of Titus (right). (The relief on the inside of the arch shows the source of some of the pictures seen earlier in the section on Rome.) About half of the Colosseum still stands. The outside wall is about 160 feet high. The interior is so skillfully constructed that a spectator had a clear view of all the action regardless of where he sat.



ment at the state's expense probably helped to keep the masses under control. But the price was high, for all who watched could not help but become brutalized.

One class of poor within the Empire was probably even worse off than the poor or unemployed masses of the cities. These were the farm workers who toiled for a bare living on the lands of the large farmers. Many of the labourers had once been small landowners who had been forced to give up their lands through debt or other causes. They became tenant farmers working their landlords' farms for a tiny fraction of the crops they produced. During the general prosperity of the first two centuries of the Empire, their condition grew steadily worse, although their work did much to support the rest of Roman society.

At the very bottom of Roman society were the slaves. Slavery had existed since the days of the early Republic but with Rome's expansion and the large number of prisoners of war which resulted from it, the number of slaves increased greatly. At first the treatment of slaves was unbelievably bad. They were not regarded as people at all. The harsh Roman aristocrat, Cato, in a book on agriculture listed three kinds of farm tools: voiceless ones (wagons and plows), inarticulate ones (oxen and mules) and speaking ones (slaves). Over the years the lot of most slaves improved somewhat, but there were many whose lives held little but misery. Worst off were those who dug in the mines or worked on construction projects or the great landed estates. Harshly treated and half-starved, they often welcomed death as the only relief from their suffering.

Most slaves lived in the cities, and while their condition was not particularly happy, there is evidence to suggest that their lives were not just an endless round of hardship. Many were household servants. Even a lower middle class household could usually boast a few slaves, while a wealthy man might own 1000. Emperors had as many as 20,000. Slaves performed an endless variety of tasks. They were cooks and bakers, porters and waiters, barbers and valets, street cleaners and aqueduct repairmen, entertainers and clerks.

Many slaves were skilled men who became an important part of a wealthy household as craftsmen. Some rich men hired out their craftsmen-slaves or even established them in business, the slave receiving a share of the money he earned. In this way a slave could save his money and buy his freedom. He then became what was known as a freedman, and could even acquire slaves of his own. Talented freedmen often held important positions in the administration of the Empire.

Among the most important functions performed by slaves was that of education. Most of the teachers were well-educated Greeks who taught the children of the wealthy in their homes or in schools. (For the poor there were no schools.) At elementary schools children of well-to-do Romans learned the three R's — reading, writing and arithmetic — and graduated at the age of twelve or thirteen. At this point the girl's formal education ceased and she remained at home where she often received individual instruction from a slave. Boys advanced to a secondary school



A Roman relief shows a goatherd, who was probably one of Cato's "speaking" farm implements. If not a slave, he may have been one of the farmers who no longer owned his own land but worked on a rich man's villa.



There were certain similarities between growing up in ancient Rome and growing up today. The father finds he has little to do with the baby while he is very young. Soon, however, the child becomes old enough to enjoy playing with his father's beard. There are a few years of freedom for playing games and pretending to be a famous charioteer in the Circus Maximus. When the youth faces his first duties, however, he finds that his father is a patient but stern taskmaster when it comes to reciting his lessons.

where they studied such subjects as grammar, history, geography and astronomy. At sixteen they graduated, were accepted as men and citizens, and either took their place in society or went on to more advanced studies. The final stage in the education of a rich man's son was to travel to the great centres of Greek civilization, particularly Athens.

Life in the early centuries of the Roman Empire presented many contrasts. It seems likely that more people within its boundaries enjoyed a higher standard of living and were better governed than ever before. At the same time, there were inequalities. Some lived in selfish luxury, while others starved. Some lived in idleness, while others toiled endlessly to support them. In other words, as with every society, the Roman Empire had its strengths and weaknesses. Yet whatever one's final verdict, it cannot be denied that under

Roman imperial rule the whole Mediterranean region became more unified and more civilized.

ROMAN CULTURE

At the same time as the Romans were establishing their system of government for the Empire, they were also making their greatest cultural advances. Much of Roman culture was Greek in origin. Most Romans greatly admired the Greeks whom they had conquered. From them the Romans borrowed or imitated a great deal, particularly in the fields of art, literature, science and philosophy. In doing so, they helped to preserve and spread the Greek cultural heritage. In other areas, the practical Romans were much more creative, and as we have seen, they excelled in engineering, law and administration.

The best Roman literature was produced between the first century B.C. and the second century A.D. Most writers followed Greek examples, both in the way they wrote and in the subjects they chose. However, the best Roman literature has a distinctive quality, and rivals that of the Greek masters. The fact that it was written in Latin is also important. Knowledge of Greek soon died out in the Western Empire, so that Latin was the language through which the Western world learned about ancient cultures.

It is generally agreed that Rome's greatest writer was the poet Virgil. Virgil grew up during

the period of the civil wars in Rome, which ended with the triumph of Augustus. Eventually Augustus noticed his work and made it possible for him to spend all of his time writing. Virgil's greatest poem is the *Aeneid*, which is very much like the great epic poems of Homer. In the *Aeneid* Virgil tells of the adventures of the Trojan hero, Aeneas. After the Greek siege of Troy, Aeneas sets out, at the order of the gods, to found a new city that would one day rule the world. In other words, Rome's rise to world power was according to a divine plan. In carrying out the orders of the gods, Aeneas has many difficulties, but like the ideal Roman which he represents, his bravery, courage and patriotism enable him to overcome all obstacles. Virgil hoped to support the policies of Augustus by praising the virtues which had made Rome great, the old virtues of bravery, industry, simplicity and self-control which Augustus was trying to restore.

The greatest prose writer was a middle-class Roman lawyer named Cicero. An active politician, Cicero wrote a great many forceful speeches

which remain as models of the way to use words to persuade. Among his most famous speeches were four which he delivered as consul in 63 B.C. against a schemer named Catiline, who tried to overthrow the government. As well as his speeches, Cicero wrote many essays on a wide variety of topics, and almost 800 letters. These letters not only reveal an intensely interesting person but also tell a great deal about contemporary Roman society and politics. Few prose writers in history have ever written with such genius on such a wide range of subjects. Cicero was also a man of courage and conviction. After the murder of Caesar, he supported the forces of Republicanism and vigorously opposed Mark Antony's bid for power despite the risks of attacking so powerful a figure:

You grieve, senators, that three armies of the Roman people have been slaughtered. Antony slaughtered them. You mourn the noblest of your citizens. Antony robbed us of them too. The authority of this, our order, has been overthrown. Antony overthrew it. In a word, all we have seen afterwards (and what evil have we not seen), if we reason rightly, we shall credit to Antony alone.



In this Tunisian mosaic the famous Roman poet Virgil is seen holding the *Aeneid*. Standing on either side of him are figures representing the muses or spirits of tragedy and epic. The epic is a narrative form of poetry celebrating heroic deeds, and to this class the *Aeneid* belonged.

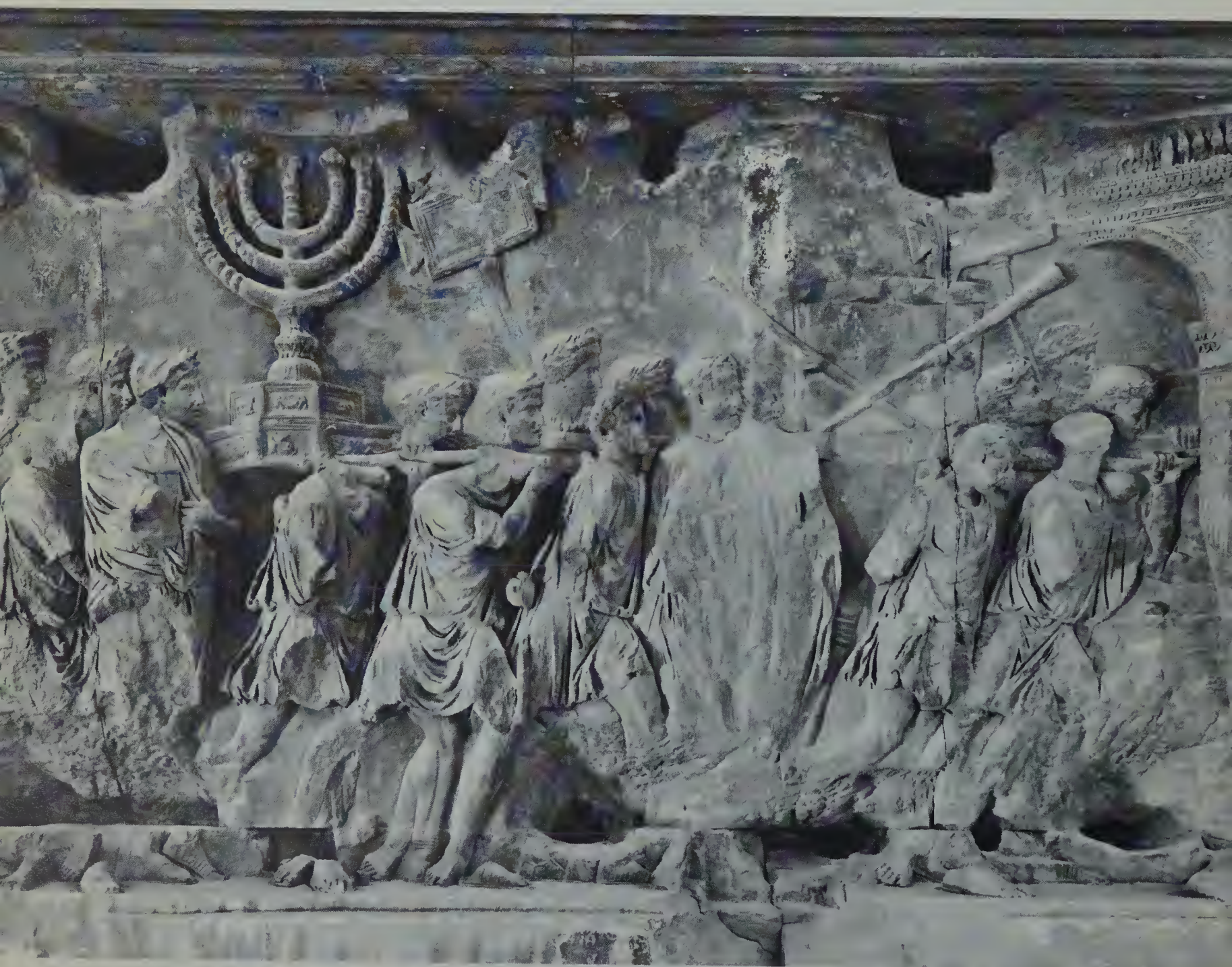
It is not difficult to understand why Cicero was among those killed when Antony and his partners in the Second Triumvirate came to power.

In the visual arts, as in literature, the Romans borrowed heavily from the Greeks. In fact they not only borrowed Greek ideas, they actually stole a great many Greek works of art. Victorious returning armies brought back thousands of statues, columns and paintings. For many years the Roman sculptors were content to copy famous Greek productions. Some of the best Greek sculpture, in fact, exists today only in Roman copies. In time, the Romans developed a sculpture of their own, which at its best realistically portrayed personalities or events. The bas-relief work carved on a number of triumphal arches and columns (such as those seen earlier) shows historical scenes with great clarity.

Although Roman architecture was also based on Greek models, the Romans added features

One of the Romans' most celebrated thefts was the capture of the contents of the temple in Jerusalem. In A.D. 70 the Romans ruthlessly suppressed a Jewish revolt, destroyed the temple and carried off its treasures. The details were recorded in stone in the Roman Forum on the Arch of Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem. In this relief, Roman soldiers follow Titus, and

among them are manacled Jewish prisoners. On their shoulders they carry the Table of the Bread of the Presence, on top of which is the cup of Yahweh and underneath, two silver trumpets. A second group of soldiers are carrying the seven-branched candlestick: "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold. . . . And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof." (Exodus)



of their own. They used the arch and the dome which had been developed in the Near East, and changed them to form the basis of their great structures. These techniques made it possible for the Romans to build more varied structures than had been possible for the Greeks, who had relied on columns. The use of the arch and the discovery of concrete also enabled the Romans to engineer their great miracles, the aqueducts and bridges.

Although the Romans contributed a great deal in such practical arts as building, they made no real progress in science or scientific thought. Here again the practical Romans were imitators rather than creators. They did not usually seek new knowledge for its own sake, but they were excellent at collecting and organizing useful information. To Romans, the interesting and important thing was to use or apply the principles which had already been discovered. For the most part they were not interested in learning to use the scientific method employed by the Greeks. Certainly though, the technical skills developed and passed on by Roman engineers, builders and artisans were no little contribution to the development of Western civilization.

In no area was Roman borrowing more obvious than in religion. The early Romans, like most primitive peoples, worshipped spirits connected with nature and the family. From the Greeks they learned to think of these spirits or gods in human form. The Romans, in fact, merely took for their own many of the important Greek gods and by

giving them Latin names made them Roman. Thus Zeus became Jupiter and Athena, Minerva.

The worship of their gods did not arouse strong religious feelings among the Roman people. For the most part they were content to leave religion to the priests. There was little emphasis on formal worship. A man in need of a favour would make a vow to some god. But he would carry out his promise only if the god first granted his request. The obvious weaknesses of this religion caused it to decline. As men became better educated, they looked with contempt upon the old gods. During the early Empire an increasing number of Romans turned to new religions from the east. Most of these appealed to the emotions and offered their believers a personal saviour and a life after death. The fact that the imperial government did not pass laws making these religions illegal encouraged their spread. One religion from the east, Christianity, was not tolerated. It was not that its teaching clashed with Roman religious ideas, but that Roman authorities believed that the Christians were a threat to peace and order. Despite persecution, however, Christianity, and indeed many of the other eastern religions, survived and spread. The effects proved to be serious, for all the religions emphasized the importance of preparing for life after death rather than dealing with the existing problems of the Roman Empire. These problems were so serious, however, that they demanded the fullest attention if Rome was to survive.

The City of God

A Roman citizen, writing to his nephew who was with the army in Syria, observed, "Our slaves are getting much excited about this so-called Messiah, and a few of them, who openly talked of the new kingdom (whatever that means) have been crucified. I would like to know the truth about all these rumours. . . ." In his letter the nephew replied, "A few days ago a pedlar came . . . to the camp. I bought some of his olives and I asked him whether he had ever heard of the famous Messiah who was killed when he was young. He said that he remembered it very clearly, because his father had taken him to Golgotha (a hill just outside the city) to see the execution, and to show him what

became of the enemies of the laws of the people of Judaea."

The Roman soldier was, of course, writing about Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in the town of Bethlehem in Palestine. All that we know about the life of Jesus is found in the first four books of the New Testament, the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Their stories of Christ's life differ in some detail, but in general the story of Jesus is the same in all four gospels.

(The following picture essay uses texts from the Bible, ancient and medieval drawings, and the results of the work of modern scholars to trace the history of early Christianity.)

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. . . . And she, Mary, brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour which is Christ the Lord." Like the medieval artist who illustrated a prayer book with this painting of the angel and the shepherds, almost everyone in the Western world knows the story told by St. Luke of the birth of Jesus.





According to St. Matthew, after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt following a warning from an angel that Herod the Great, King of Judaea, had heard of the young child and wished to destroy him. Later, the family returned from Egypt and settled in Nazareth. There the young boy grew up, learning his father's skills as a carpenter or mason. He was brought up in a pious Jewish home and learned to read and write in the synagogue. He was an able student, and enjoyed discussing religious matters with his elders. St. Luke wrote that

when he was twelve Jesus strayed from his parents during a visit to Jerusalem. He was later found in the temple engaged in an earnest discussion or argument with the learned men of the temple. "And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them."



Jesus was about thirty years old when John the Baptist, a prophet, began preaching in Palestine. John called on the people to repent and turn from their sinful ways, predicting that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and that a Messiah or leader would soon come to lead his people. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee,

and comest thou to me?" But Jesus insisted and was baptized by John in the Jordan River, supposedly where this photograph was taken. "And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Such is the story told by St. Matthew.



This drawing of bread and a fish, found in a cave under the city of Rome, refers to the famous story in the Gospels which tells of Jesus turning a loaf of bread and some fishes into enough food for a huge crowd of his followers. After his baptism he had gone into the wilderness by himself, where he fasted, prayed and meditated for forty days and nights. Then he travelled about Palestine,

preaching in synagogues, on hillsides and in village squares. Christ's teachings attracted many followers. He taught of a kind and loving God and of an after-life in Heaven that could be attained by all just, moral and believing people. He called on people to love their neighbours and their enemies, as well as God. He illustrated his teachings with simple but clear parables such as those of the Prodigal Son and the Good

Samaritan. The Bible also recounts how his fame spread as he worked miracles in healing the sick, the blind and the lame. The core of the teaching of Jesus is found in the Sermon on the Mount, where he expressed such ideas as "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

As the fame of Jesus spread, he gained many followers who hailed him as King of the Jews and as the Son of God. He also gained many enemies, among them Roman officials who feared rebellion and, more important, many Jewish

religious officials who disputed his message. Finally, in A.D. 30, according to most historians, Jesus visited Jerusalem to challenge his opponents. He secured the approval of many people when he expelled the money changers and cattle

dealers from the temple. However, he angered the priests by engaging in an open debate with them on complex religious questions. On the evening after he and his twelve disciples had eaten the famous Last Supper, they withdrew to the slopes of the Mount of Olives. But one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, betrayed to the authorities their resting place outside the city. Here, Judas thought, they were far away from the crowds that might support Jesus if an attempt was made to arrest him. During the night Jesus was seized in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount, where gnarled and ancient olive trees still stand today.



Tragedy at Calvary

This casket of wood and ivory, made in A.D. 360, dramatically tells the rest of the story. Jesus can be seen standing in the garden, after Judas had identified him by kissing him. Then, according to St. Luke, "Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this

is your hour, and the power of darkness. Then they took him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house." To the right in the top column, Peter is shown denying that he knew Christ: "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." In the bottom column Jesus is brought before the high priests and then before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, who is shown washing his hands. The Roman heard the charges, but saw little cause for the execution of Jesus. Finally, however, he yielded to the demands of Jesus' enemies and agreed to the sentence of death.





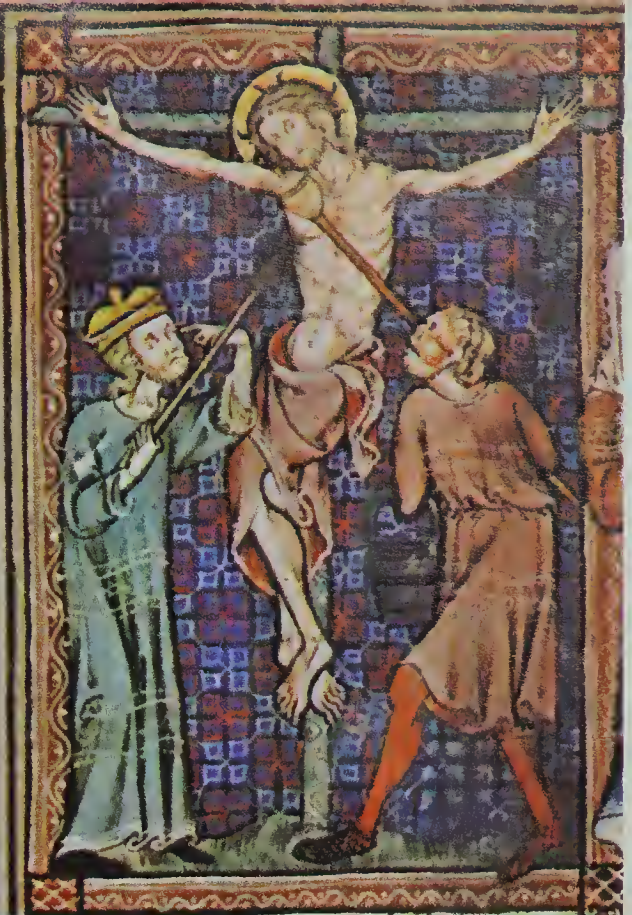
Jesus was sentenced to be crucified, along with two criminals. Under Roman law a man sentenced to be crucified was first beaten with thongs or weighted chains. This fourteenth-century illustration from an English prayer book shows Jesus being scourged or beaten. He was then placed on the cross at Calvary. On the cross Pontius Pilate had his men place a sign to ridicule Jesus, on which was written: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The first letters of the Latin version spelled out *I.N.R.I.*, initials that were to become the symbol of Christ's supreme position among Christians. The Book of St. Luke tells the story of the crucifixion: "And when they were come to the

place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. . . . And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

Although the bodies of executed criminals were usually thrown into pits, Pilate released the body of Christ to a man named Joseph of Arimathea. St. Luke wrote: "And he

took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid."

An illustration in a twelfth-century prayer book retells the central story of the Christian religion. When, after resting on the Sabbath, Jesus' friends returned to his tomb, they found the stone guarding the entrance rolled away and the sepulchre empty. They were convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven. His disciples taught that he was the Son of God who had died to save mankind, and then risen from the dead. Just as Christ had risen, so could the faithful members of his Church.





The enthusiasm of the early Christians was increased by the belief that Jesus would soon return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. One of the most devoted of the early disciples was Peter, one of the twelve apostles, who, like the men shown here, was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. Peter travelled about the eastern Mediterranean preaching. Apparently he was so successful in healing the sick that a magician offered him money for the secret of his miraculous powers. Peter finally made his way to Rome itself where he played a leading role in establishing a Christian community in the heart of the Roman Empire.

Perhaps the man who did most to promote the growth of Christianity was Saul of Tarsus, later known as Paul. A Jewish tent-maker, St. Paul was at first opposed to the Christians. In fact, the short, broad-

shouldered man was well-known for hunting down Christian believers in Jerusalem and the nearby villages.

One day while he was going from Jerusalem to Damascus to begin new attacks on Christians, he saw a vision

and heard Christ ask, "Why persecutest thou me?" As is portrayed in this picture from an early medieval Bible, Paul fell down blinded on the road to Damascus and had to be led by the hand into the city. There he was healed by Ananias, who had received Christ's command to cure Paul. With his sight recovered, Paul became a Christian, convinced that he had been chosen to spread the gospel to all peoples. Between A.D. 47 and 59 he travelled over 8000 miles throughout the Mediterranean world from Spain to Palestine.

Not only did Paul convert men of all races and classes to Christianity, he also established countless new churches. His letters to Christians throughout the Roman Empire, such as those to the Ephesians and the Corinthians, make up an important part of the New Testament. The letters were full of religious enthusiasm and practical advice. They did much to strengthen and guide the new Christian communities through their most difficult early years. In transforming Christianity into a world religion and in carrying Christianity out of Palestine to people throughout the Roman world, Paul is rightly considered one of the greatest missionaries of all time.



When Peter and Paul first arrived in Rome, there was little opposition to Christianity. The average Roman citizen, while accepting the gods of his fathers, was not greatly concerned about the ideas and doctrines of religion. Slowly, however, the attitude of the Romans changed. The Christians condemned worldly success, wealth and war. They insisted that their God was the only god, and that the gods of the Romans were false. They refused to pay homage to the emperor (since that meant accepting him as a god), take oaths in the law courts or join the army. So long as the Empire was growing in size and wealth, the

Romans were merely amused by the Christian prophecy that it would fall because of the sinfulness of the Roman way of life. But as conditions worsened in Rome, opposition to this kind of criticism increased. Active persecution of the Christians began under Nero, when the evil emperor was searching for a scapegoat for the great fire, which he may have set himself. Both Peter and Paul were executed during or shortly after this wave of persecution. By A.D. 100 it was unlawful to be a Christian, and anyone confessing the Christian faith could be tortured and put to death. Christians moved underground in a very real sense. The

chapel seen here, for example, was built underground on the Appian Way about a mile and a half from the gates of the city.

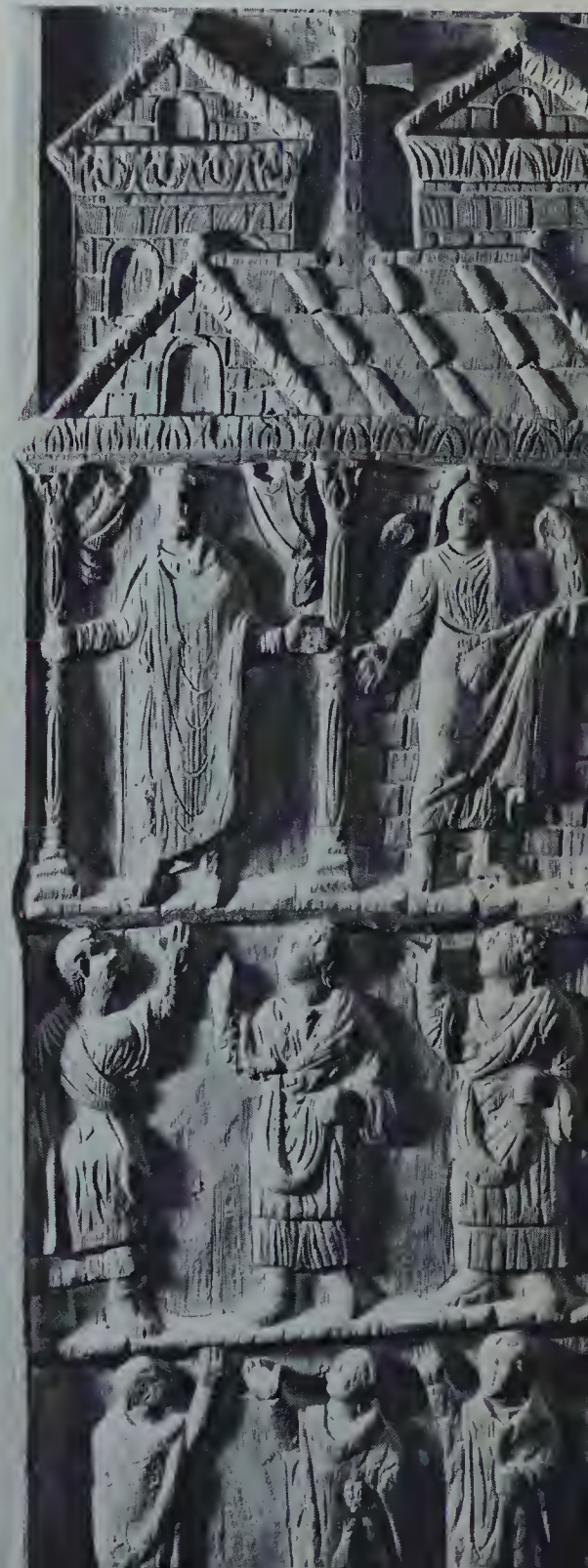
Yet Roman policy was still not as harsh as it was to become. As the Emperor Trajan wrote: "The Christians are not to be sought out; but if brought before you, and the crime is proved, they must be punished." But when the Empire began its rapid decline in the third century, there was much harsher and more determined persecution. Thousands of Christians died in mass executions or were thrown into the arena to be destroyed by wild animals before the bloodthirsty mob.



It is sometimes said that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." In the Roman Empire this seemed to be true. More and more people turned to Christianity, perhaps impressed by the courage and faith of the Christians. This illustration from an eleventh-century manuscript tells the famous story of Constantine's conversion to Christianity during a bitter military campaign in 312. One version is that the worried general had a dream in which he was told to mark a Christian emblem on the shields of his troops, while another states that he saw a cross in the sky with the words "By this you shall conquer." At any event, Constantine was triumphant at the battle of Mulvian

Bridge. His victory sealed his belief in the power of the Christian God to bring success. The Emperor Constantine granted Christians the right to worship, and made Christianity equal to other religions. A few years later he made Sunday a legal holiday and day of prayer.

The final triumph came in 380 when the Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Empire. The wooden carving below vividly illustrates the victory of Christianity. The building is meant to represent the Empire. Beneath the cross stand the emperor and an angel, and below them stand respectful senators and ordinary Romans.



The Christian Church needed more than the blood of martyrs to survive; it also needed practical organization. The apostles, like Peter and John who had lived with Christ, had naturally been the first leaders of the Christian community; their successors were men who were deliberately chosen and set apart to continue their work. These new leaders were called bishops, meaning overseers. Each one had control over all churches within his district or diocese. Under the bishops were priests who preached, advised the people and administered the sacraments, such as those connected with baptism, marriage, confession and death.

While there were many important dioceses in the early days of the Church, the one at Rome soon became the most important. St. Peter and St. Paul had founded the diocese of Rome, and Christians placed great emphasis on the words of St. Matthew which reported Christ as saying: "thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . ." This twelfth-century picture shows Christ handing the keys to Peter. St. Peter became the first bishop of Rome. Later bishops of the city claimed that, like Peter, they received their



uis qui sanat & refi-
dat regnum celorum. cui uis. magne petri
domi ditate. tot & tantis dignitatib; sullir-
mus & infim' homuncio multis & grauul-
datus angustis. miserabiliter indigeo aux-
tante. sed nec os meum habet uerba quib; i-
sicut ipsa e. & primum nec cor meum habet
tam infimo adtuam tantam sullimitati
atq; iterum conor mentem meam torpent-
lutam pinaria restringere. sed omnib; u

authority directly from Christ. As the Roman Empire in the west weakened and then collapsed, the diocese of Rome provided the only stable and effective government of the Church. By the seventh century, with western Europe overrun by barbarians, the western

bishops were organized under the bishop of Rome (the Pope), who had emerged as the supreme head of the western Church. In the east, the Church, centred at Constantinople under the strict control of the emperor, developed its own practices and beliefs.



The bishops were responsible for determining correct religious doctrines. It was they who developed the short summary of the Christian faith known as the Apostles' Creed. The work of certain bishops was so

outstanding that they have become known as the Church Fathers. The three most famous in the early church were St. Ambrose, St. Jerome and St. Augustine, all of whom lived in the fourth century. St. Ambrose

refused to celebrate Mass while the Emperor Theodosius, who had just slaughtered 7000 innocent people, was in the church. The Emperor was forced to repent. In bringing about his repentance St. Ambrose had established the principle that in matters of faith and moral conduct political rulers must obey the Church authorities. St. Jerome was a great scholar whose translation of the Old and New Testament, known as the Vulgate, is still used today in the Roman Catholic Church.

The greatest of the Church Fathers was St. Augustine, shown here as he was imagined by a sixteenth-century artist. As a young man St. Augustine had led an enjoyable but sinful life. But under the influence of his mother and St. Ambrose he became a Christian at the age of thirty-two, and soon turned his great mind to writing. While his book *Confessions* is one of the greatest accounts of a personal religious experience, his most outstanding work is *The City of God*. The book was written partly to challenge the charges that Christianity had led to Rome's decline. He argued that non-Christian empires had fallen in the past. Moreover, he said, all history was the unfolding of God's plan and could best be explained as a continuing battle between the City of God, the saved, and the City of Earth, those who rejected God. Ultimately, the City of God would triumph. St. Augustine was the most important Churchman since St. Paul.

In five hundred years, a short time in the early history of the Western world, Christianity had undergone an amazing growth and triumph. As the Roman Empire collapsed, the Christian Church alone remained firm to its principles. By

A.D. 500 the Roman Empire in the west was in ruins. But the Church had escaped the wreckage and had expanded in size and strength. It was to be one of the rocks upon which a new civilization in the west would be built.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors and publisher wish to express their appreciation to Professor Gary Smith, The College of Education, University of Toronto, for much of the research for this book.

The authors and publisher would also like to thank the following museums, agencies and individuals for providing the illustrative material reproduced on the pages listed:

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